

*THE CONNECTION BETWEEN
ENGLAND & BURGUNDY
DURING THE FIRST HALF OF
THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY*

LEONARD V. D. OWEN

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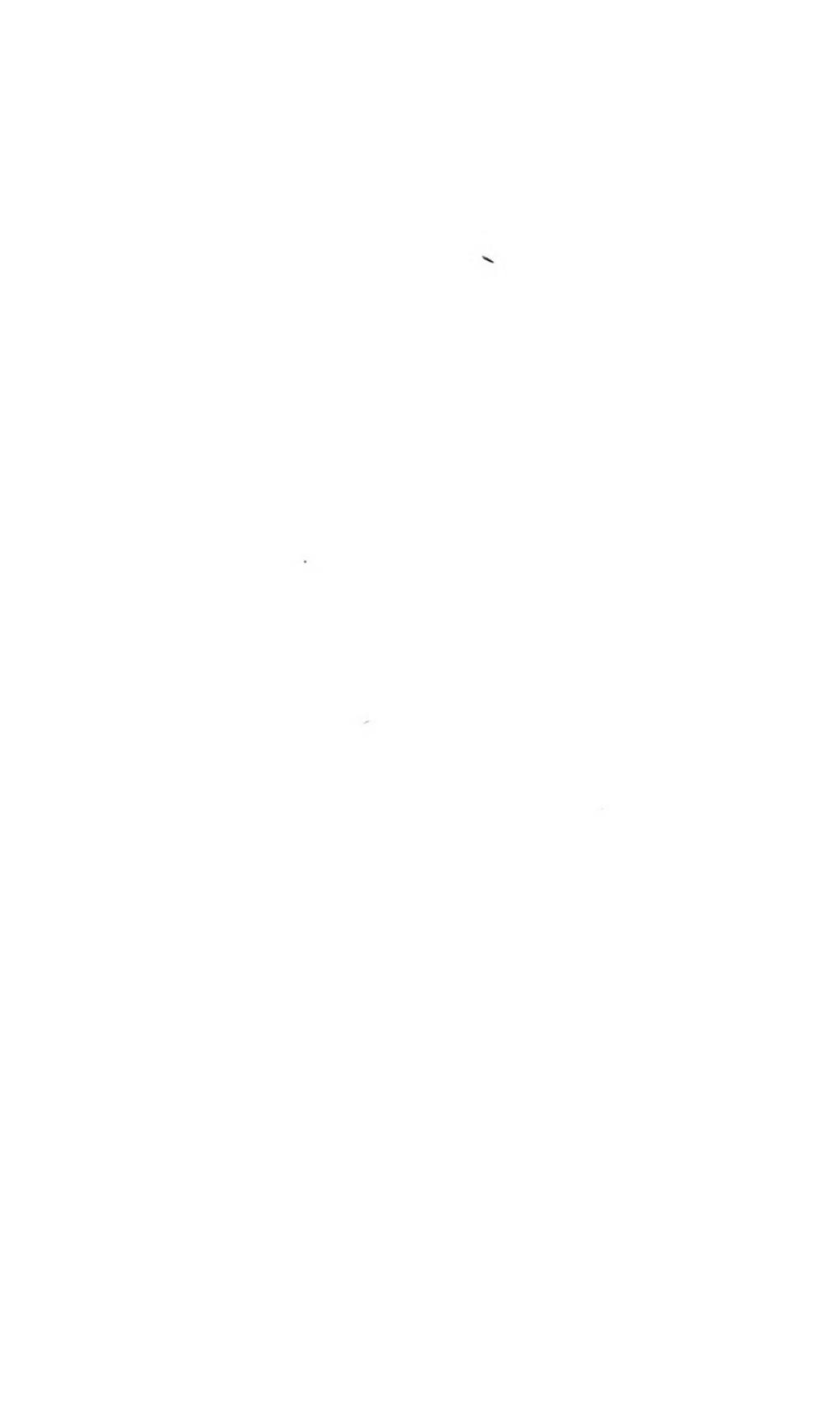
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THE STANHOPE ESSAY
1909

BY
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“Thus muste Flaundres for nede have unité and pease with us,
it wolle none other be.”—*Libel of English Policy*

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INTRODUCTION

THE period with which this Essay is to deal unfortunately just falls short of comprising the whole of the meteoric course of the Burgundian House, regenerated by the action of John of France in 1363. Fifteen years before the accession of Henry IV. the relations of England and Flanders had expanded into the relations of England and Burgundy by the lapse of the heritage of Louis de Male, Count of Flanders, to Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, who merged the interests of commercial and populous Flanders with those of the rest of his dominions. Of such a long period as that involved in the Burgundian policy of Henry IV., Henry V., and Henry VI. it is impossible to treat in so small a space with the adequacy and care which the subject demands. More than that, the spasmodic nature of the negotiations at various times necessitates the division of the narrative into parts. The first of these parts deals with the relations of England and Burgundy from the accession of Henry IV. to the death of Margaret of Burgundy, wife of Philip the Bold. The second deals with the

tortuous diplomacy of John the Fearless down to the death of Henry IV. in 1413. The third follows the career of John of Burgundy until his assassination at Montereau. The fourth part, which is in some respects the most important, stretches from the Treaty of Troyes in 1420 to the Compact of Arras in 1435 ; and the Essay practically concludes with the death of Philip the Good in 1467. The commercial relations of England and Flanders, which were of such vital importance to the English Kings, as well as to the Burgundian Dukes, and which form the one stable motive in the chaos of conflicting tendencies and emotions, claim a separate discussion for themselves.

The latter half of the fourteenth century saw an extraordinary development in the affairs of the Low Countries. The consciousness of a growing tendency towards Nationalism on the part of the seemingly diverse nations which formed the population of these territories coincided, in a most remarkable manner, with the foundation on a new basis of the House of Burgundy, in the expansion of which they were soon to be merged. The new Valois Dukes of Burgundy formed the natural heads of the Flemish and Wallon movement towards a national independence from the Empire, as well as from France. By the marriage of Margaret of Flanders to Philip le Hardi in 1369 the foundations of a new European power were laid down. A fairly detailed account of the rise of the House of Burgundy from its foundation in 1363 will form, therefore, a necessary preliminary to any consideration of the relations into which its Dukes, secure on their new footing in the Netherlands, entered with the Kings of England. In 1361 the Duchy of Burgundy, which had been governed since 1032 by Dukes who were descendants of Robert the Pious,

lapsed to the French Crown by the death of Philip le Rouvre, the last of the old Capetian stock. Two years later the duchy was granted by King John II. of France to his son Philip le Hardi, in recognition of his signal services to the national cause. In accordance with the consistent domain-enlarging policy of the French Monarchy, Philip was married in 1369 to Margaret, the only daughter and heiress of Louis de Male, Count of Flanders, and the Count's death in 1384 made the Duke of Burgundy Lord of Flanders in his wife's right. The marriage effected, in addition to the transference of Flanders, Nevers, and Rethel, the union of the Duchy and County of Burgundy, which latter had descended to Margaret from her grandmother, another Margaret, wife of Louis II. of Flanders. The Duke of Burgundy was now established in a firm territorial position in the Netherlands, and from this date onwards he pursued with unfaltering insistence the eastward advance of Burgundy into the provinces of the Empire. Philip le Hardi and his successors, with the full sympathy of the inhabitants of their own domains, as well as of those of the Imperial fiefs in the Netherlands, aimed at the establishment of a compact Burgundian kingdom, which was to stretch from the Rhone to the German Ocean.

It was also a singularly happy circumstance in favour of the Burgundian Dukes that the ancient dynasties which had ruled the Low Countries died out one after another in this momentous second half of the fourteenth century. Hainault, Holland, and Brabant received new lines of Princes, with whom their subjects had little sympathy. The Houses of Wittelsbach and Luxemburg, which now became the rivals of the Burgundian dynasty for the control of the Netherlands, already possessed

large territories in Germany, and occasionally strove after the Imperial dignity. Thus the history of the development of the power of the Burgundian Dukes consists of the struggle between the representatives of France and of the Empire for the preponderating influence over the destinies of the Low Countries. While the French Monarchy supported, indirectly with its prestige and directly with its troops, the efforts of Philip le Hardi, the Wittelsbachs and the Luxemburgs failed dismally to extract any assistance from their suzerain, the Emperor, and so the issue of the conflict was never long in doubt. But the French Kings did not, however, realize at this time the colossal mistake which they had made in allowing one of the younger branches of their house to establish a territorial power in the north-east, a state of affairs which was later brought home to them with such bitter emphasis.

Philip le Hardi, now secure in Flanders, directed his attention to the tottering States on his northern and eastern frontiers. By a series of subtle marriage alliances Burgundian influence was insinuated into Alsace, and Philip took precautions to secure the succession of a member of his family to the Duchy of Brabant, whose Duchess, Jeanne, had not long to live. He defeated the English scheme for a marriage between William, heir-presumptive of Bavaria, with a daughter of John of Gaunt by a double alliance, which was secured by the marriage of his son, John of Nevers, to Margaret of Bavaria, while Philip's own daughter, Margaret, received as her husband William, the young Duke of Holland and Hainault. By such means as these Philip, with the full consent of the Low Country States, worked to secure for his family a compact territory between France and Germany. He died in 1404,

leaving three sons : the eldest, John the Fearless, inherited the united Burgundies, Flanders, and Artois ; the second, Antony, succeeded in 1406, by a previous direction of his mother's niece, the sole heiress of the Duchess Jeanne of Bavaria, to the vast inheritance of that Princess, as well as the Duchy of Limburg and the Marquisate of Antwerp. In 1411, by his marriage with Elizabeth of Goerlitz, he united to his already great titles the additional one of Duke of Luxemburg ; but he was killed at Agincourt, and his two sons died in turn, leaving no issue—one in 1427, and the other in 1430. It is thus to Philip the Good (1419-1467) that the greatest part of the acquisitions of the Dukes of Burgundy returns. In 1421 Philip purchased the Marquisate of Namur, and in 1430 he obtained possession of Brabant, Limburg, and Antwerp. In 1433 he joined the Counties of Holland, Hainault, Zeeland, and Frisia to his domains by a forced agreement with his unfortunate cousin, Jacqueline of Hainault. Finally, his entrance into the possession of the Duchy of Luxemburg in 1446 closes the list of his acquisitions in the Low Countries.

But he had not been idle on the French side of the frontier. In 1419 he seized Boulogne, and in 1423 he obtained, by a grant from Henry VI. of England, the Counties of Maçon and Auxerre and the castellanies of Peronne, Roye, and Montdidier, which he had already held for five years. By his Treaty of Arras in 1435 with the French King he lost none of the advantages he had gained by the English alliance, but added to his estates the definite possession of what contemporary documents call "the Somme Towns"—St. Quentin, Corbie, Amiens, Abbeville, and the County of Ponthieu. With the acquisitions of Philip's successor, Charles le Téméraire, we are scarcely concerned ; but the foregoing account

of the expansion of Burgundy and of the rounding off of the Flemish and Wallon domains is significant of the fact that Imperial investiture was the only thing needed to make Philip the Good King of Burgundy.

But Philip le Hardi in 1399 could hardly have realized the coming development of the Burgundian power ; he was still a patriotic Frenchman, and, unlike his three successors, regarded England as an irreconcilable enemy. He belonged to a former age in which French patriotism consisted in being anti-English. It was perhaps well for English commercial interests that the term of his life was drawing to its close, and that he was making way for rulers who might appreciate more fully the almost independent position which they had acquired, and who were free in a great degree from the prejudices which had actuated the founder of their line. It cannot be denied that Philip had a real cause for his dislike of England, for the simple reason that English interference, as a result of the revolt of Ghent in 1379, had only narrowly failed, owing to its belated exercise, to assist in the establishment of an independent and republican Flanders in the place of the Countship of Louis de Male, a development which had appeared on the horizon of possibility owing to the semi-independent position, both with regard to their old Counts and to their new Dukes, which the towns of Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres, together with the so-called "Territory of Franc," had assumed under the title of the "Four Members of Flanders."

The revolt of Ghent had led in 1382 to the Battle of Roosebec, in which the Flemish, under their demagogic leader, Philip van Artevelde, son of the more famous James of the same name, were almost annihilated by the onrush of the chivalry of France and Flanders under the direction of their future Duke. In the following

year occurred the impolitic interference of England in the badly-disguised "Crusade" of Henry Despenser, Bishop of Norwich, a freak of policy which made that warlike prelate an object of suspicion to the Flemish and their Duke for many years to come. This suspicion and dislike of England on the part of Duke Philip militated seriously against the traditional influences which his new acquisition of Flanders tended naturally to exert upon him, and which would sooner or later take effect. Flanders was in the unique position throughout the Middle Ages of being politically French, but economically English, and the Separatist tendencies developed in the Burgundian Netherlands could not long resist the powerful drift towards England which was the result of economic pressure and overwhelming commercial interest. Once Philip le Hardi was dead his Duchess, who was not, owing to her nationality, animated by the same spirit of hostility as her husband, was only too ready to give the Flemish trend full play. She resumed the commercial negotiations which her husband had designedly allowed to prove abortive, but she did not, however, succeed in dissipating the general suspicion of England which Philip had inculcated into the minds of the Flemish, who were, it must be admitted, in this respect of a very receptive turn of mind. The conduct of affairs in the Netherlands devolved upon the Duchess in the absence of her son, John the Fearless, as the result of the campaign of Nicopolis. The first part of the Essay gives a short account of the exhausting and tortuous negotiations which were conducted with the most culpable insincerity by Philip le Hardi and the Four Members, and concludes with the death of the Duchess in March, 1405.

The period begins in what is practically a state of open

commercial warfare between England and Flanders—a position of affairs in which the ever-prevalent piracy of the Middle Ages did nothing but assume a more virulent form than usual. The Flemish seem, on the whole, to have been unwilling to come to terms with England. At first, ostensibly, they regarded the position of Henry IV. as illegal, and as an insult to their suzerain, the King of France—a pretext which gave them the opportunity to indulge in their decided, but often compulsorily latent, proclivities to plunder the ships of various nations with a strict impartiality which would have done credit to a better cause. It is hard to fathom the depths of the Flemish mind, especially after the lapse of several centuries, but there can hardly be any doubt that the piracy which was practised on a wholesale scale during the few years which followed the accession of Henry IV. was secretly connived at by the Duke of Burgundy, and by the Duchess after him, in spite of their indignant denials. It is trite to say that there is always something in rumour, and the report which found credit among the representatives of the King of England in Flanders to the effect that the spoils were shared by the rulers of the Low Countries may very probably have had some foundation in fact. However that may be, the tardy fashion in which they replied to the representations of Henry IV. may perhaps incriminate them to a certain extent ; but the divided state of Flanders between the suzerain and the Four Members must also be taken into account as being in some measure responsible for the continual disappointments which the English deputies had to face. Still, it must not be supposed that the Flemish were the only offenders. Regarded from the standpoint of the free-booter, the English sailors were as pleased with events

as the Flemish, and it required a great deal of effort on the part of the King and his Admiral to keep them in check. But, however profitable such enterprises might be to the persons engaged in them, the loss to the Governments of England and Flanders could not fail to be considerable, and this unfortunate fact at last compelled the rulers of Flanders to attend to the English demands. The foregoing remarks will do something to explain the seemingly suicidal apathy of the Flemish with regard to the negotiations which cover the first five years of the period with which we have to deal.

I

THE first phases of the Hundred Years' War were over, but its atmosphere lived on, and the hostility of the French nation to England was reflected in the attitude of Philip le Hardi, Duke of Burgundy. He had been, apparently, opposed to the peace with England, which had been concluded in 1395, which was cemented in the following year by the marriage of Richard II. to Isabella, the seven-year-old daughter of Charles VI. of France—a union which the Duke of Burgundy declared, when he heard of Richard's death, three years later, to have been a farce and a delusion.¹ The ill-advised nature of Richard's foreign policy soon became evident ; its main result was his deposition in favour of Henry IV. Meanwhile the King and nobility of France decided with unanimity not to recognize the usurper, a decision which was, of course, endorsed by the Duke of Burgundy, as one of the chief vassals of the French Crown. This meant a tacit declaration of a state of war between France, which included Flanders, and England ; and Burgundy's Flemish vassals were not slow to take advantage of the fact that their suzerain was hostile to English interests. Prominent among the satellites of Burgundy was the Count of St. Pol, who immediately began a series of piratical raids upon English commerce. The English only too readily retaliated, and a condition of affairs resulted which was the necessary consequence of the fact that the predominance of no one country on

¹ Waurin, Chron.

the seas was assured. Piracy and rapine rapidly became so common that the seas were turned into hot-beds of crime, and legitimate commerce, difficult enough before, was reduced to an absolute impossibility.¹ The direct result of all this was that a continuous volume of complaints began to reach both Governments,² and Henry IV. was compelled, in the interests of English merchants, to open negotiations with the Flemish and with the Duke of Burgundy, their responsible head, for the mitigation of these evils, which were injurious alike to the prosperity of both countries.

A typical instance of the recriminations which now began to fly between England and Flanders is supplied in the first place by the letter³ which the Burgomasters, Eschevins, and Consuls of the town of Bruges sent on August 11, 1402, to the Mayor, Aldermen, and Councillors of London, containing the complaint that their previous letters with regard to the acts of piracy which had been repeatedly committed by the English on their ships have been fruitless of result. They particularized the cases of a certain Paul Kenigard, who was kept a prisoner by the Admiral of England at Portsmouth, and of John Willes, a poor fisherman of Ostend, who had been captured and conveyed to Hull, where he was detained with his vessel and tackle. Another letter,⁴ written on the 15th of the same month to the English deputies at Leulinghem, contains a duplicate of these grievances, and urges the necessity of speedy restitution. That grounds for this retaliation on the part of the English were far from being wanting is proved by

¹ Letter of English Ambassadors in Norway and Sweden to Henry IV., "Royal Letters, Henry IV."

² Rymer, "Fœdera," vii. and viii.

³ *Ibid.*, viii. 273. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

the writs¹ issued by the King on January 11, 1403, to the Sheriffs of Kent and other maritime counties for the publication of a proclamation to the effect that all persons having any complaints of injuries committed upon them by the Flemings in contravention of the Treaty of 1395 between England and Flanders were to appear to substantiate these charges in the presence of the ambassadors of the "Four Members," now present with the Council at Westminster, bearing the grievances of the Flemish towns. Owing, however, it seems, to the default of the English defendants, who were to act at the suggestion of the King in the additional rôle of plaintiffs, and who fail to appear, presumably owing to the difficulties and expense of travelling no less than to their own guilty consciences, the conference which was to have taken place at Westminster was postponed to July 1, and the place changed to Calais. A writ was accordingly issued on June 12, 1403,² to demand the attendance of John Hanley, of Dartmouth, and other sailors and merchants concerned, at the adjourned meeting at Calais. Nor was the Duke of Burgundy idle. He had, apparently, by this time been forced, both by the success of Henry IV. and by the gradual ruin of Flemish commerce, to acquiesce in the usurpation, and to treat with him as King of England. His councillor, John de Saulx, received on April 4, 1403, a safe-conduct for ten weeks. By the commission of June 12 Nicholas de Ryssheton and John Urban had been appointed to act as the representatives of Henry at the coming conference. The failure of the Flemish to appear on the appointed day—July 1—necessitated a further delay until August 29, when the English ambassadors contracted with the Flemish envoys a provisional agree-

¹ Rymer, "Fœdera," viii. 286.

² *Ibid.*, p. 303.

ment, the basis of which consisted in the maintenance of the Treaty of 1395 in its original form, with a prolongation of the private truce concluded between Henry IV. and the Flemish deputies, Fexmellis and Scorkin, in March, 1402, until the November following. This agreement was concerned principally with certain goods belonging to English merchants which were detained at Sluys pending inquiries, and with certain prisoners in a similar condition. It was arranged that on November 10 both Burgundy and Henry should despatch deputies to Calais armed with full powers for a final settlement. It is significant of the independent position assumed at this time by the commercial centres of Flanders that the Four Members undertake to send deputies, even though their Duke fails to keep his word.¹

Nothing is more remarkable in the history of these relations than the persistent way in which the Flemish seem to have played with the earnest efforts of the King of England. Contrasted with the disheartening defection of the Flemish is the honourable conduct of the English deputies, who stuck to their thankless task with heroic fortitude. Henry IV. himself was far too anxious for the welfare of English commerce to abandon the negotiations in disgust, and the Four Members seem to have been well aware of this, for they, as well as their Duke, ignored November 10 when it came round, making the English justifiably indignant at what they called "the insulting defection of the Flemish." Still there was no alternative but to go on with the negotiations, and on December 20, 1403, Henry issued a new commission² nominating Hugh Luttrell, Thomas Swinburne, Nicholas de Ryssheton, and John Urban as his representatives. He urged them to agitate for a resump-

¹ Rymer, "Fœdera," viii. 327.

² *Ibid.*, p. 344.

tion of the previous agreement, which had been nullified by the non-appearance of the Flemish on November 10. On December 4, 1403,¹ the English ambassadors complained to the Duke of the repeated infringements by the Flemish of the truce which had been agreed to pending the negotiations. They declared, also, that Burgundy's position on the French Council was quite inconsistent with the hostile attitude of the French fleet. If the French were acting with the connivance of Burgundy, as they had heard, it was hardly any use continuing the negotiations, since they would "vex themselves at great expense to no purpose." The deputies also deplored the conduct of the Duke of Orleans and of the Count of St. Pol, that most enterprising and successful brigand. The Duke vouchsafed no reply,² and the delay produced a fresh crop of piracies which rejoiced other hearts than the Flemish. In December the Magistrates of Bruges wrote to the English ambassadors describing the capture of a vessel of Schiedam by a war-galley of Calais. They received the comforting reply that the Calais sailors thought that the wine was French, taking refuge under the Flemish flag.

On January 4, 1404, Luttrell wrote to King Henry describing the manifest chicanery of the Flemings, who now requested a further delay while they consulted their Duke.³ It was the fixed conviction of the English embassy that the Flemish were only playing into the hands of the French, and they were at a loss as to how to proceed.⁴ They found themselves unable to prevent the piratical raids of the Flemish or of the now notorious

¹ Rymer, "Fœdera," viii. 274; "Royal Letters, Henry IV.," p. 270.

² "Royal Letters, Henry IV.," p. 186.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 200. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

St. Pol, who had long maintained a powerful fleet in Burgundy's own harbour of Gravelines. Sir Richard Aston, Captain of Calais, in a letter written to the Duke himself on March 18, 1404,¹ describes the seaboard of Flanders as an armed arsenal for the destruction of English trade; while the Count of St. Pol had even pushed a plundering expedition into the Isle of Wight. The Count, said Aston, was a vassal of the Duke's, and he was therefore responsible for his actions. He reminded Burgundy of the reputation of the French Kings as the "lords of an abundant fountain of justice and equity"—a very appropriate hint at a time when Charles VI. was a mere puppet in the hands of Burgundy and Orleans. Burgundy's position as Regent of France was full of significance to the English envoys, who informed Henry that he might infer from the correspondence of the Flemish "the intentions of the French, though veiled under the title of letters of the Flemish, and declared in their letters with subtlety of words."² Later in the same year they sent him news of active preparations on the part of the Flemish and French for the invasion of Wales or some other part of the kingdom. In their opinion the County of Flanders was as much subject to French influence as any part of England was to his own. Such was at least the temporary success of the French policy with regard to Flanders. They stated, further, that no treaty with Flanders would be of any avail apart from the treaty with France, and urged the speedy conclusion of the latter, owing to the shifty character of the Flemings,³ of whom the same flattering estimate appears in the letter of Sir Richard Aston, a part of which has been cited above.

¹ "Royal Letters, Henry IV.," pp. 213, 214.

² *Ibid.*, p. 212.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 379.

Philip le Hardi died on April 27, 1404, and the conduct of affairs in Burgundy and Flanders devolved, as has been already stated, upon the Duchess Margaret, in the absence of the new Duke. She showed herself in the subsequent transactions far more conciliatory than her late husband. It is a noteworthy fact that both the Duchesses who were called upon to administer the affairs of Burgundy—Margaret, for her son, and afterwards Isabella of Portugal for her husband, Philip the Good—initiated almost a complete reversal of the policy previously pursued. Just at present both the Flemish and their Duchess realized the necessity for humouring the English a little more. The change of opinion in Flanders is attested by the letter of the authorities of Bruges,¹ written only three days after the Duke's death. They notified the English deputies of the demise of their Duke, and regarded with tears the hostility which had arisen between England and Flanders, which they stated to be the effect of the misdeeds of "certain freebooters and pirates of the sea, Belial's own sowers of tares, and sons of iniquity." They also declared that as far as Flanders, at any rate, was concerned, the Duchess desired to devote her energies to the restoration of peace. Henry stated that he was cordially of the same opinion. He wished to establish anew the old friendly relations with the Four Members, and to avoid for the future the effusion of Christian blood, in spite of the refractory and ungrateful conduct of the Flemish, as contrasted with his own magnanimity and long-suffering.²

Meanwhile the Duchess had begun to act. Proclamations were issued to restrain the piratical exploits of her subjects, with the saving clause inserted, "provided that the English do and cause the like to be done." She

¹ "Royal Letters, Henry IV.," p. 230.

² *Ibid.*, p. 230.

also applied to the King of France for powers to treat in her own person,¹ but even now the correspondence which passed between the two parties demonstrates very clearly the mutual suspicion with which they regarded each other. In spite of continual protestations of good faith on the part of the English ambassadors, the Flemish affected to believe that, under cover of the negotiations, "certain enterprises were to be undertaken in England against the land of Flanders." These preparations, they said, were under the direction of Henry Despenser,² the bellicose Bishop of Norwich, who has already been mentioned as the leader of the disastrous "Crusade" of 1383. After this slight hitch, the Duchess asked that the envoys should be sent over by July 20 (1404),³ but this was regarded as too short a notice. The English ambassadors did not arrive in Calais until August 20.⁴ Even when they did arrive, they took the impolitic course of upbraiding the treachery of the Flemish. This caused another delay of some duration, due ostensibly to the Flemish desire to "ascertain the will" of their Duchess.⁵ Meanwhile the English embassy had been reduced by forced absence and by sickness to the single person of the veteran De Ryssheton, who did not forget to inform the King of the condensed nature of the body that represented him in Flanders. In spite of the apparent sympathy of the Duchess, the inaction of the English envoys led to a renewed outbreak of freebooting on the part of the Flemish.⁶ The unabashed character of these last outrages provoked a personal letter⁷ from Henry IV. to the Duchess. In addition to a raid upon some English fishing-vessels, the

¹ "Royal Letters, Henry IV.," p. 247.

² *Ibid.*, p. 256.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 266.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 309.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 353.

pirates had seized a ship in which the Bishop of Hereford was proceeding from Middleburgh to England, and after thrusting out all hands into the sea, had detained the worthy prelate for ransom at Dunkirk. The "thrusting of all hands into the sea" is a picturesque touch, and reminds one rather forcibly of Chaucer's shipman of Dartmouth, who sent his prisoners "home by sea to every land," demonstrating the painful fact that "walking the plank" was as popular an institution among medieval pirates as among their successors of later date. Serious as this incident was, it did not interfere materially with the resumption of the negotiations. The Flemish now objected to the English demand that a restoration of the confiscated merchandise should form a necessary preliminary to any discussion. This caused a breach between the Duchess and the Four Members. She decided to cut adrift from them, and to treat with the English through her own representatives only. The complication which ensued necessitated an alteration in the existing arrangements, and the English deputies returned their commission to the Privy Council¹ for the necessary alterations, with a request for its immediate return,² a demand which had to be repeated no less than nine times by special messenger without result.

While the Council in England deliberated as to whether it was any good continuing the negotiations with so unsatisfactory a party as the Flemish, the ambassadors were fully employed in pleading the cause of the Bishop and the fishermen. The piracy still continued, and the envoys accused the Duchess³ of personally examining and distributing the spoils,⁴ an action which they described as "the signal for battle on the part of Your Excellency."

¹ "Royal Letters, Henry IV.," p. 335. ² *Ibid.*, p. 398.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 345, 348. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 350.

With regard to the Bishop, they were now treating separately with the Four Members. Unless these wrongs are speedily corrected, they said, "the Commons of the realm will appoint a remedy (which God forbid) exceedingly severe."¹ Contemporary events in England rendered this threat extremely impolitic. Trouble was brewing in the North, Owen "Glendower" was in open revolt in Wales, and the Exchequer was empty. It seemed, indeed, that the Flemish held all the cards, and as invasion was threatening from the side of France, the Duchess could afford to laugh at the vain words of the English. She proceeded to use recrimination, and accused the English of similar malpractices, citing specifically a descent upon Sluys on August 14, 1404, when they had dismantled a church and driven off cattle. She was astounded at their effrontery. This mild irony on the part of the Duchess extracted from the English ambassadors a sarcastic comment on her idea of an equivalent. The plunder of a few cattle was a trifle compared with an attack upon and the abduction of a Bishop and six hundred fishermen.² During all this time the Council had made no progress, and De Ryssheton wrote on October 6 to the Archbishop of Canterbury requesting the immediate despatch of the commission.³ The lethargic attitude of the Council astonished him, considering "the tempests which daily rage more and more against the King and his realm"—an allusion to the threatened French invasion. The Flemish fleet was also being prepared to aid the French to the number of seven-and-thirty ships. On October 14, 1404, De Ryssheton wrote again, this time to the Mayor of London,⁴ giving intelligence of the magnitude of the

¹ "Royal Letters, Henry IV.," p. 359. ² *Ibid.*, p. 389.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 384.

French preparations at Sluys against England. The English ambassadors now wrote to the Duchess in extreme indignation, but their efforts found no support from the Council.¹ They decided to return to England unless the commission arrived before the forthcoming Feast of All Saints. They received no reply, and returned to England. At this point the series of letters relating to Flanders contained in the first volume of the Royal Letters of Henry IV. comes to an end. The connection between these letters is admirably set forth in that volume, and it is a pity that we have not a similar edition of the correspondence of the rest of the reign.

Twelve days after the return of the ambassadors the long-desired commission was issued by Henry at Coventry.² He nominated Richard, Bishop of Bangor, Sir Richard Aston, and De Ryssheton with full powers to treat with the Duchess and the Four Members, whose deputies had arrived in Westminster to inquire into the losses which had been sustained by the English. Henry urged his representatives to agitate for a renewal of the truce as it stood on November 10, 1403. These negotiations were destined to continue for another sixteen months before any definite treaty was drawn up between England and Flanders ; during this time the commission was twice reissued.³ The Duchess Margaret had died on March 27, 1405, and John the Fearless had assumed control of Flemish affairs. This Duke, surnamed "the Fearless" owing to his rash conduct during the Turkish Wars, was not the only Duke of Burgundy who obtained a misleading title. Not one of the Burgundian Dukes had a character which calls for special admiration, and Jean Sans-peur least of all. He did not lack courage,

¹ "Royal Letters, Henry IV.," p. 376.

² Rymer, "Fœdera," viii. 385.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 391, 444.

but he was shifty, cunning, and unscrupulous. Unlike his father, he was not bound by patriotic ties of a very enduring kind to the French Monarchy—a fact which a representative of that body did not forget. John the Fearless had no definite line of policy ; he judged all men by his own standard of morality, and his consequent cynicism led to an overdone caution which he only once allowed himself to forget. It was the last time. His enemies saw to it that he should have no other chance. At present his assumption of the control of Flemish affairs meant a brighter outlook for the much-tried English ambassadors. An end was put to their labours and sufferings by the Treaty of March, 1406.

II

THE next seven years form an important period in the history of the relations of England and Burgundy. Events within the French kingdom relieved the struggling Lancastrian House in England of the one real danger which threatened it, and enabled Henry IV. to enter upon a positive policy with regard to France. The rapid rise of the territorial power of the House of Burgundy under the fostering care of Philip le Hardi had excited the jealousy and apprehension of Louis of Orleans,¹ who had attempted to introduce Orleanist influence into the Netherlands as a counterpoise to that of Burgundy. Added to the fact that Burgundy and Orleans were already engaged in deadly strife for the preponderating position in French internal affairs, the organization of an Orleanist opposition in the Low Countries—a sphere in which the Burgundian Dukes had determined to tolerate no rivals—formed the final incentive for the assassination of Louis of Orleans on November 23, 1407. Burgundy's action divided France into North and South in the great civil war that ensued. From the start the opposing factions were working for a complete reversal of the relations in which England and France had stood during the first few years of the century. Charles VI. had, as we have seen, refused to recognize Henry IV. as King of England, and had declined without politeness to admit Henry's ambassadors to his presence. These insults Henry had been

¹ Pirenne, "Hist. Belgique," vol. ii., p. 210.

forced to endure with as good a grace as possible, and he waited for the opportunity for revenge which fortune placed in his grasp before many years had passed. Both Burgundy and Orleans, as the feud increased in virulence, looked across the Channel and began to bid for Henry's support. This fact enabled the English King to pursue an aggressive policy, by means of which, with very little expenditure of money and blood, he reduced the internal affairs of France to a state of absolute desperation, and rendered the realm an easy prey to the ambitious designs of his successor.

But in 1406 the two parties had not gone to sufficient lengths in their feud to make them forget their common patriotism. To Burgundy and Orleans England was still the traditional foe of France, and this sentiment gave rise to the last combined movement of the rivals before they concentrated their forces for the destruction of one another. In March, 1406,¹ John the Fearless had concluded with Henry IV. a treaty which secured for a time the commercial welfare of England and Flanders. This agreement took the usual form, and, like all the others, may be summed up in three words—merchants, fishermen, clerks. It was a long-standing grievance, from the English point of view, that merchants settled in foreign parts were in a far inferior position both with regard to status and privileges than alien traders settled in England. Attempts were continually being made to remedy this defect with more or less success. Fishermen were always very great sufferers from a state of war, real or virtual, and therefore they claimed a prominent position in all the commercial treaties. The sea being so insecure a means of communication, the overland route to Rome was universally favoured in the Middle

¹ "Fœdera," viii. 469.

Ages, since it offered a slightly reduced catalogue of risks. Over a large part of this route the Duke of Burgundy had control, owing to his territorial position in the Netherlands and in Central France. Therefore each of the Anglo-Flemish treaties contains express provisions for the needs of English clerics on their way to and from the Eternal City.

The Treaty of 1406¹ was, of course, arranged to continue in force in spite of any complications which might arise between England and France, and therefore the existence of the treaty did not interfere with the design of John the Fearless with regard to Calais. In September, 1406, the Dukes of Burgundy and Orleans, after a reconciliation which was as hollow as anything could well be, determined to make in collaboration an organized attack upon the English possessions in France. Burgundy undertook to besiege Calais, while Orleans moved against Bordeaux. John the Fearless, however, delayed his advance so long, owing to his elaborate preparations, that he gave Henry in England and the citizens of Calais ample time to provide for his reception. While he dallied and wavered Henry was issuing writs to the sheriffs throughout England and to the Chancellor of the Palatine County of Lancaster—so great was the peril adjudged to be—with instructions to them to be prepared with the levies of their respective shires to resist the attack which the Duke of Burgundy intended making upon Calais with the assistance of Flanders and Brabant.² It appears, however, that the Duke's dilatory conduct on this occasion was due in no small part to the action of English emissaries, who had no doubt been sent from Calais. Burgundy had prepared a large array of war-engines and cannon for his enterprise at St. Omer, but

¹ "Fœdera," viii. 469.

² *Ibid.*, p. 456.

as he was about to start there arrived letters, ostensibly from the King of France, expressing great disapproval of the expedition and commanding its instant abandonment. It is said that the Duke almost wept for annoyance at the receipt of these despatches, which were in reality the figment of some of his numerous enemies. Accordingly, he stored his siege-gear in the enclosure of the Church of St. Bertin at St. Omer until he should resume his enterprise. But some traitors of St. Omer sold the means of destroying the tackle to the English. All the engines were burnt, as well as a large part of the Abbey of St. Bertin, an affair which caused great terror throughout St. Omer. But—the chronicler adds with satisfaction—the traitors were detected, and died with great dishonour.¹

This was in October, and when the Duke in the following month appeared before the walls of Calais, the English shire levies were not needed to supplement the effect of the torrential rains and arctic cold upon his half-hearted enterprise. Orleans, with more respect for the contract than his shifty ally, had started long before. He directed his main attack upon the formidable fortress of Bourg, on the Gironde, one of the bulwarks of Bordeaux. This southern attempt also ended in disaster, and Orleans returned to continue his civil struggle with Burgundy. The same year saw the final blow delivered to any semblance of French unity by the treacherous hand of John the Fearless, who realized that the only way to relieve the pressure of Orleanist territorial aggression was to deprive the rival faction of its head. Louis of Orleans was assassinated by emissaries of the Duke of Burgundy on November 23, 1407, and his death

¹ "Chroniques Belges Inédites," ed. Kervyn de Lettenhove, vol. ii., pp. 423, 424.

made his rival at once supreme in France, since the King was mere clay in the hands of Burgundy. At first John the Fearless appeared the most sincere mourner for the death of Orleans,¹ but as soon as he had made his position secure he made an open avowal of his complicity in the crime. He was now able to force upon his rivals a formal reconciliation, which took place on March 9, 1409. The Orleanist faction was only waiting for a leader, and the want was soon supplied by the marriage of the young Charles of Orleans to a daughter of Bernard, Count of Armagnac, whose leadership and name were adopted for the rejuvenated Orleanist party. The growing unpopularity of John the Fearless supplied the motive-power of the coalition of the French nobility, which was now formed for the suppression of the Burgundian influence at Court. Orleans and Armagnac were joined by the Dukes of Berri, Bourbon, and Brittany. In the strength of this combination Orleans demanded the banishment of Burgundy as the instigator of his father's murder. Civil war ensued, and France was divided into two hostile camps, between which flowed the Loire.

The Armagnacs depended upon the nobility of the South and West; the Burgundians looked for support to the burghers of Paris and the Flemish towns; while both parties simultaneously applied to the English Government for aid. But while the Armagnacs contented themselves with the request that no assistance should be granted to their rivals,² the Duke of Burgundy had the support of the traditional alliance of England and Flanders. There was also the consideration that the Orleanists had always been consistently hostile to

¹ "Chron. de la Pucille," p. 115.

² "Chron. St. Denys," iv. 475.

England. The way in which the English attitude towards the combatants was affected by commercial interest is demonstrated by the politic conduct of Burgundy towards his Flemish subjects. The efforts of Sir Richard Aston¹ and others to insure the successful maintenance of the existing treaty, and for the establishment of a surety system for the keeping of the seas between the harbours of Winchelsea and St. Valery, and towards the north and east of them, had been followed by the issue of a commission on March 8, 1408,² to the English ambassadors to negotiate the renewal of the treaty for another year. This renewal was accomplished on the 11th of the following June,³ with the additional benefit of security on the seas for English, French, and Flemish. For this latter measure Burgundy himself secured the ratification of the King of France on October 5, 1408.⁴ On May 30, 1409, the English envoys were empowered to treat at Calais with the deputies of the Duke and those of the Four Members, and to arrange for the continuance of the present peaceful relations in the interests of trade and commerce.⁵ The case of the Bishop of Hereford still dragged on its weary course, and on March 11, 1410, an entirely new set of Commissioners was created to investigate his grievances. These Commissioners were given the timely warning not to allow their zeal for justice and impartiality to carry them away so much as to endanger the good-feeling that at present existed between England and Flanders.⁶

That it was easily possible to exaggerate the warmth

¹ Rymer, "Fœdera," viii. 491.

² *Ibid.*, p. 511.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 530; Proceedings of Privy Council, i., p. 310.

⁴ "Fœdera," viii. 548.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 589; Proceedings of Privy Council, p. 353.

⁶ Rymer, "Fœdera," viii. 627.

of this *entente* is amply proved by the frequency of complaints and actions in cases of piracy committed by either side. English and Flemish freebooters adjudged the comparative quiescence a splendid opportunity for occasional pickings. As a result of the complaint of the burgesses of Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres, King Henry instructed his son Henry,¹ who was at this time Constable of Dover Castle, to investigate the circumstances of a piratical enterprise for which a certain John Prendergast was responsible, the proceeds of which had been to Rye to be disposed of. These infringements soon became so common that Thomas Pickworth, Lieutenant of Calais, and other English ambassadors were nominated in March, 1411, to consider in conjunction with the Flemish the losses of both parties, and then to proceed to reparatory measures.² On the whole the treaty was well kept, and was a source of mutual benefit to both countries. There can hardly be any doubt that consideration for these circumstances, as well as the personal inclinations of Prince Henry and the Beauforts, who were at the time in power, directed the English attitude with regard to the simultaneous requests of the hostile French parties. In September, 1411, the Prince despatched an embassy, consisting of the Earl of Arundel, Francis de Courte, Lord of Pembroke, Hugh Mortimer, and John Catrik,³ to negotiate a marriage between himself and Burgundy's daughter Anne—a step professedly taken “for the honour of God and the avoidance of Christian bloodshed.” The embassy bore the promise of armed assistance against the Armagnacs, and a body of troops under the command of Sir Gilbert Umphraville sailed before the end of the same month. The Parisian

¹ Rymer, “Fœdera,” viii. 656.

² *Ibid.*, p. 677.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 698, 699.

populace held out for Burgundy, and had made frequent appeals to the Duke for assistance. The Orleanist coalition had captured St. Denis on October 11, and were blockading the capital. On the 23rd Burgundy joined the English at Pontoise, and entered Paris with his allies a few days later. On November 8 a force consisting of Burgundians, Parisians, and the whole of the English contingent left Paris by the Porte St. Jacques and attacked the Armagnac entrenchments at St. Cloud. The Orleanists were expelled with the loss of about nine hundred men, and retreated beyond the Loire, leaving Burgundy secure in Paris. The English auxiliaries were dismissed on December 18 with gifts and honours, and retired to Calais. While these events were going on in France the negotiations for the marriage seem to have been allowed to hang fire. In January, 1412, the Duke sent ambassadors to England to continue them, and his action was followed in February by a return commission to the Burgundian Court headed by Thomas, Bishop of Durham. Both these embassies combined business with pleasure by still further emphasizing the need for commercial concord.¹

But just when the Anglo-Burgundian alliance propagated by the young Prince Henry was well on its way to completion by the marriage with Anne of Burgundy, a sudden change in the aspect of English internal politics ruined the whole scheme. Bishop Beaufort, on November 11, proposed to Henry IV. that he should resign the crown on account of ill-health. The King took the suggestion in a very bad grace, and immediately dismissed Thomas Beaufort from his office of Chancellor and the Prince from the Presidency of the Council, where he was replaced by his brother Thomas, soon to be made

¹ Rymer, "Fœdera," viii. 728.

Duke of Clarence, while Arundel became Chancellor in the room of Beaufort. It is this sudden change in the position of the English parties more than any fixed design on the part of Henry IV. to act as the balance of power in French affairs that now made the English veer round to the Armagnac side. It was well known that Clarence and Arundel, and perhaps even the King himself, inclined towards the Orleanists, and a distinction was made by a contemporary writer between the embassy which came in 1411 "fro the duc of Bourgne unto the prince of England" and that of 1412, when "the duc of Orleauance sent ambassadors into England unto King Henry the iiij."¹ in which the Armagnacs, quick to discern the signs of the times, offered the Duchy of Aquitaine as a stimulant to the Arundel clique. On May 18, 1412, a treaty was concluded on these terms with the Duke of Orleans. Burgundy, in high displeasure, seems to have instantly taken aggressive steps, for we find a letter, written on May 16,² from Henry to the "honourable and prudent burgomasters of Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres, which states that the King has received trustworthy information that the Duke of Burgundy is about to invade Guienne with intent to inflict injury upon "our dear friends the Dukes of Berri, Orleans, and Bourbon, and the Counts of Alençon and Armagnac." This being so, he was anxious to know what steps the Flemish towns intended taking in the matter—whether it was their intention to support their suzerain, or to maintain the treaty which they had made with England in semi-independence of him. In the latter event they were promised cordial reciprocity on his part. The Four Members appear to have given Henry's pro-

¹ Harley MSS. 2248, ff. 278, 279.

² "Fœdera," viii. 737; Proceedings of Privy Council, ii. 28.

posals a favourable hearing. On June 11 the Captain of Calais was instructed to proclaim the existence of an Anglo-Flemish truce at the request of the States of Flanders.¹ Similar instructions were issued in the following months to the Lieutenant of Dover Castle, the Warden of the Cinque Ports, and the Mayors of Sandwich and Winchelsea.² By the Treaty of May 18³ with the Armagnacs, Henry had undertaken that for the future neither he nor his heirs should make any treaty or alliance with the Duke of Burgundy, his sons, brothers, or any of his German connections whatsoever without the cognizance and consent of the Duke of Orleans. These promises were confirmed personally by the King's four sons, Henry, Thomas, John, and Humphrey, two days later.⁴ The Orleanist connection was, in spite of all this, destined to be of short duration. It was no small score for the Prince of Wales and the Burgundian party in England that the expedition under Thomas, Duke of Clarence, which was sent to the aid of the Armagnacs, proved a decided fiasco. After a few abortive wanderings in Normandy, Clarence found that Orleans, who seems to have been as shifty a character as his rival of Burgundy, was already making overtures to the enemy. The arrangement which the patriotic Dukes finally arrived at was that the party which invited the English into France should purchase their withdrawal. In the following November Clarence withdrew into Aquitaine under these new conditions, which, of course, entirely invalidated the treaty of the preceding March, and rendered a complete reversal of English foreign policy a practical certainty.

¹ "Fœdera," viii. 751.

² *Ibid.*, p. 765.

³ *Ibid.*, 739.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 743.

III

HENRY IV. died on March 20, 1413, and the leader of the Burgundian sympathizers in England became King as Henry V. His father had done the hack-work of a new dynasty, and his son felt himself secure enough on the throne to indulge in vast and definite schemes of foreign conquest, and the acquisition of martial glory which circumstance and temperament had denied his less illustrious predecessor. In these last, but not the least, glorious days of the fading Middle Ages the character of Henry V. shines forth as the resuscitation of Edward III., the flower of medieval chivalry, and his aspirations turned, like those of his ancestor, to that mirage of an Anglo-French Empire which had been at once the source of so much glory and of so much disaster to the Crown of England. Contemporaneous events within the French Kingdom were clearly offering to the new King of England an opportunity such as his predecessors had never had, and which might never occur again. France was paralyzed by the mania of her King and by the suicidal virulence of factious strife. Henry V. immediately made preparations for the final act in the Hundred Years' War. The Burgundo-Armagnac quarrel had assumed a new phase. In April, 1413, the atrocities of the Cabochien rule, which had been established in Paris by the supporters of the Duke of Burgundy, had led inevitably to a severe reaction, which had enabled the Armagnac Princes to recover possession of the city once more. John the Fearless quickly made his escape to his

own dominions, and left to the Armagnac faction that prestige which control over the King's person necessarily gave them. These retreats of the Burgundian Duke to his own domains when any crisis in French affairs threatened his person are of more than merely momentary significance. They point to the fact, which was now daily becoming more obvious, that Burgundy was consciously developing into a separate power in Europe.¹ The position which the course of events in France and the ambition of the Dukes themselves were forcing upon it gave the Burgundian House, secure in the possession of the consolidated Netherlands, the power to exercise a foreign policy which would in any case have been beyond the control of the French Monarchy. Therefore the events of the following score of years must not be regarded entirely in the customary manner, which has persisted in looking upon the Burgundian Dukes merely as unpatriotic Frenchmen working for their own ends at the expense of their country's welfare ; they must be considered as the natural result of the Burgundian policy of creating a separate kingdom between France and the Empire.

The neutrality which was preserved by John of Burgundy during the years which culminated in the Battle of Agincourt does not find, therefore, anything like its principal cause in the desire to promote Flemish commercial interests. There can be no doubt that in the Duke's mind this consideration occupied a position of some importance, but nevertheless it was subsidiary to and resultant upon the central and dominant idea of Burgundian independence. But even so, the bonds which united the Valois Dukes of Burgundy to the interests of the French Monarchy, of which they were a

¹ Pirenne, "Hist. de Belgique," ii. 220.

branch, needed something more than a matter of mere political expediency to break them irretrievably. For this cause of rupture the House of Burgundy had not long to wait ; meanwhile Burgundy had to content himself with waiting to see what were the intentions of Henry V. of England. As we have already noticed, John the Fearless did not make any sign of movement until the result of the Battle of Agincourt marked out for him a more definite course of action.

At the very beginning of Henry's reign the two French parties had again made overtures to him. It is noticeable that Clarence and the Armagnac party in England still had some weight, as their proposals delayed any decided action on the King's part. The question which seems to have agitated Henry was the difficulty of deciding from which party in France the more advantageous terms were to be obtained. Accordingly, negotiations were opened with both Burgundians and Armagnacs. Henry himself, supported by Bedford, inclined towards Burgundy, and in July, 1413,¹ Henry Chichele, Bishop of St. David's, and Richard, Earl of Warwick, were appointed ambassadors to proceed to Burgundy's presence to treat for a renewal of the truce with France, and for an agreement with the Duke with regard to his own dominions. The Burgundians were at this time still supreme in Paris, and after negotiations had been conducted for some time at Leulinghem, near Calais, the envoys returned bearing an extension of the truce for Picardy and Flanders. Contemporaneous negotiations conducted by Edward of York also took place with the Armagnacs for a marriage between Henry and the French King's daughter Catharine, an alliance which was afterwards concluded under the auspices of

¹ " *Fœdera*," ix. 34, 36.

the rival faction. The Armagnacs decided to send an embassy to England, and their envoys arrived in London on December 19, 1413.¹ The only result of the conference was the conclusion of a truce to last until February, 1415. In the following year embassies again reached England from the rivals, and the favour with which Henry regarded the envoys of Burgundy is evidenced by the fact that he treated with them in person at Leicester, while the Dauphin's ambassadors were allowed to remain in London. On May 23 Henry concluded a secret treaty with Burgundy, which provided for an alliance against the Armagnacs, but with a saving for the French King.² Following upon this advance, the Duke of Burgundy sent as envoys to England Radulf of Bruges and John of Robais,³ to treat for the marriage which Henry had now in view between himself and Catharine, another of Burgundy's daughters. They described in glowing terms the nobility, the beauty, and sound morality of that Princess, and on June 4 Henry commissioned Henry le Scrope and Hugh Mortimer to negotiate for the marriage, and to secure the confirmation of the present friendly relations both in politics and commerce. They were also to use Henry's claim to the throne of France to receive in his name the Duke's homage as his vassal.⁴ The negotiations which were being carried on with the Dauphin's party proved abortive, but Henry was not disappointed. He was playing one party against the other with the greatest success, and was also—more important still—gaining time for the preparations for his coming campaign in France. In these transactions with the Burgundians

¹ "Chron. London," p. 97.

² Kingsford, "Henry V.," p. 114.

³ "Fœdera," ix. 136.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

and Armagnacs it is only fair to state that Henry was as insincere as they were. However, embassies continued to arrive from the Duke of Burgundy,¹ who seems to have been anxious to complete a provisional settlement on the terms suggested by Henry. But the latter was too busy with the final touches to his preparations for war. He had taken good care to make his terms with the Dauphin so extravagant as to be impossible of acceptance, so that there could be only one result from the tortuous negotiations. On August 7, 1415, Henry embarked in person for the invasion of France and for the recovery of his heritage.

Even at this time the English King fully recognized the trend of Burgundian affairs, and before he sailed from Southampton Water he despatched Philip Morgan to negotiate with the Duke, who had now sent several abortive embassies into England, for a treaty and alliance with securities against ill-faith on either part.² This was on August 10, and on the next day the English army set sail for Normandy. The details of the Agincourt campaign do not bear upon our subject, but the attitude of the Duke of Burgundy has to be considered. Even in the face of this national peril the French Princes could not act in concert ; the Orleanist party hoped that Burgundy would not interfere in order that they might have the sole credit of annihilating the English. John of Burgundy, pursuing the subtleties of his own schemes, bided his time. He sent explicit instructions to his own vassals that they were to take no part in the coming contest, and saw not without a secret feeling of satisfaction the overthrow of the Orleanist chivalry on the fatal field of Agincourt. This indifference to the fate of France was not, however,

¹ "Fœdera," ix. 158, 179.

² *Ibid.*, p. 304.

shared by the immediate relatives of the Duke in spite of the strenuous efforts of the head of their House to prevent any aid from reaching the French camp. Two of his brothers, and many gentlemen of Artois and Picardy, joined the French ranks, an example which stirred the martial zeal of John's son Philip, Count of Charolais, who afterwards expressed bitter regret that he had not taken part in the battle, whether for life or for death.¹

The result of Agincourt evidently pleased the Duke of Burgundy, who determined to make full use of the French fiasco. He was, however, slightly embittered against the English owing to the death of his two brothers in the battle. But at the precise moment at which success seemed assured his schemes were ruined by the frantic energy of Bernard, Count of Armagnac, who hurriedly brought up his Gascon levies from the South, and was made Constable by the French King. In December, 1415, matters were complicated by the death of the Dauphin Louis, who was succeeded by his brother John, formerly the protégé of the Duke of Burgundy. He had been betrothed to the Duke's niece, Jacqueline of Hainault, who springs into considerable prominence later on. In spite of this opportune event for the Burgundian cause, the Armagnacs continued to govern in the King's name. Burgundy, who saw that his opponents had been too quick for him, continued his negotiations with Henry V., who received into safe-conduct by letters patent on January 15, 1416, the Duke's envoys, Thierry le Roy and George Doonstede, with eight persons of their company.² A large part of the work of this embassy was concerned with the commercial relations of England and Flanders,³ and in the

¹ "Chron. St. Remy," i. 239, 240.

² "Fœdera," ix. 328.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 331.

following June the existing treaty was prolonged for another year.¹ But the deputations which reached Henry from the Duke did not confine themselves to merely temporal matters. Both John the Fearless and Henry V. were deeply interested in common with the rest of the Princes of Christendom in the deliberations of the Council of Constance, which had been convened by the Emperor Sigismund in November, 1414, and was still in session. Contemporary events in Europe created within the Council itself a replica of the Continental situation of which the struggle between France and England was the visible embodiment. The four "nations" into which the members of the Council had been divided—Italian, French, German, and English—were finally reduced to two opposing forces, Latin against Teuton. It was therefore Henry's main policy to gain the goodwill of John of Burgundy, which would be a factor of no inconsiderable importance to the strength of the Teutonic element in the Council. He met the representations of John the Fearless by appointing the Bishop of Coventry and Richard, Earl of Warwick, to discuss with the envoys of the Duke matters concerned with the Universal Church, and the possibility of combined English and Burgundian action.²

In addition to his strenuous efforts to restore unity to the Church, Sigismund determined, in his capacity as suzerain of Christendom, to devote his energies to the satisfactory conclusion of the French War. Paris was chosen as the seat of the first negotiations; but Sigismund soon perceived that in the French capital he was not likely to prove successful. He decided to transfer the negotiations to London, and, accompanied by a French embassy, he arrived in England early in May. On the

¹ "Fœdera," ix. 354.

² *Ibid.*, p. 374.

28th of the same month William of Holland came over to England at Sigismund's request to assist in the deliberations. The Emperor was, however, as unsuccessful in London as he had been in Paris, and although he had now given up the idea of a peaceful settlement, he consented to be present at the conference which was to be held at Calais in August, at which the Duke of Burgundy had also been urged to appear by several requests from Henry, who had commissioned Bishop Catrik to call at the Burgundian Court on his way to Constance to make arrangements for the meeting. The negotiations with the French envoys only resulted in a general truce to last until February, 1417, and this was all that had been expected. The real motive for the conference was the desire of both Henry and the Emperor to come to some definite agreement with the Duke of Burgundy, who arrived on October 3, the very day on which the French envoys departed. Little as Henry trusted the shifty Duke, he realized that his goodwill could at any rate be purchased, and he decided to use this means to bind the Duke to his side. John the Fearless, always prone to judge men by his own standard of fidelity, had at first, acting on the additional suggestion of his Council, who were quite as cynical of human nature as the Duke himself, refused to attend at Calais unless two Dukes and four of the highest Earls in England were offered as hostages.¹

Subsequent negotiations, however, transacted by the Duke's ambassadors in the presence of Henry V. and his Council,² were attended with such success that John was induced to moderate his demands. Ultimately the King's brother Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester,³

¹ Goodwin, "History of Henry V."

² *Ibid.*

³ "Fœdera," ix. 390.

agreed to become surety for the safety of the wily Burgundy, and the most elaborate preparations were made at Calais for the arrival of the latter. A residence was also being prepared at St. Omer for the Duke of Gloucester. On October 3 Gloucester rode out of Calais, and stayed at the arm of the sea at Gravelines. Burgundy arrived on the other side, and they rode across, shaking hands in the midst of the water. On his arrival at St. Omer the Duke was well entertained by Burgundy's son, the Count of Charolais. Such is Goodwin's account, following Monstrelet, of the meeting of John the Fearless and Duke Humphrey. Burgundy was met by the Earl of Salisbury, and conducted to his hostel by the Earl of Warwick, the Captain of Calais. On the same day he had a conference with the Emperor, for King Henry had already effected a reconciliation between them. Then followed three days' colloquy in public and four days of secret negotiation, upon the conclusion of which Burgundy left Calais, and his noble hostage was safely conducted back to his countrymen. The secret nature of the business transacted bred in English minds a suspicion of the Duke's intentions, which was intensified by the unflattering estimate circulated with regard to his character generally that "he had two faces, like all Frenchmen."¹ It was palpably Henry's intention to induce the Duke to join the alliance which had just been cemented between himself and the Emperor. Burgundy, with characteristic caution, declined to take the ultimate step, because he was not prepared at this moment to break irremediably with France; therefore "he amused the King with fair and ambiguous words." He was proof against the alluring prospects which were dangled before his eyes by the

¹ Goodwin, "History of Henry V."

equally crafty, but more straightforward, King of England, who offered him a share of the conquests which they would make as allies.¹ All that the Duke would publicly give his consent to was a prolongation of the truce which had been made for Flanders and Artois in the previous June.

The secret negotiations also raised suspicions of the Duke of Burgundy on the French side as well, and the Duke determined on this account to make some concessions to Henry, who sent accordingly, in April, 1417, an embassy, consisting of Henry Ware, William Bardolf,² and two others, to effect some definite arrangement with Burgundy. Henry's representations appear to have been conclusive, and the Duke signed at Calais, on May 8, a treaty³ which, if it did not accomplish all Henry would have liked, yet removed, at any rate for a short time, the hovering fear that the scanty French sympathies of the Duke might expand to the extent of his affording assistance to the tottering French Monarchy. But Burgundy's sympathies were regulated by strict considerations of loss or gain, and he was in no hurry to back what might prove to be a losing horse. For the present his actions were merely tentative. He is stated to have acknowledged the legality of Henry's claim to the French throne, but to have decided to defer acting the part of vassal until Henry had given sufficient assurance that he would eventually conquer France from the English Channel to the Mediterranean. He broke with the traditions of his House, however, in so far as he promised a small amount of assistance in the present. On the whole, it is plain that the Duke's gallant attempt to compromise between the

¹ Monstrelet; Le Fevre, p. 104.

² Rymer, "Fœdera," ix. 449. ³ *Ibid.*, pp. 451, 454.

obvious wishes of Henry V. and the ties, feeble as they were, which still bound him to the French Monarchy, was successful only in gaining him the suspicion of both parties ; but it must be acknowledged that his position was a difficult one. He was the controlling head of a new unit in European politics which was only just becoming conscious of its independent power, and he was being forced to choose a definite policy at a time when he was totally unprepared for so drastic a step.

While the Duke vacillated and wavered, Henry was busy preparing for the invasion of Normandy to all intents and purposes as though the former were in active alliance with England. The French certainly regarded the Duke as a traitor, and this fact had been of immense service to Henry, because the French forces were divided thereby, and left him practically free from serious opposition. The Armagnacs regarded the Duke as the more immediate danger, and concentrated their forces for the defence of the capital, which was naturally the object of Burgundy's attack, while he still protested with his usual duplicity that he was acting entirely on his own behalf, and not in collusion with Henry. But the Duke's vehement denials failed conspicuously to produce the desired effect upon French minds ; his campaign had evidently been arranged in accordance with his concordat with the English King, who landed in Normandy at the very moment when Duke John crossed the borders of Picardy in his march on Paris. While the Burgundians and Armagnacs wrestled for the Isle of France and Paris, Henry continued cheerfully his systematic reduction of the Norman towns. His position was at this juncture further strengthened for the moment by the accession of Isabella, the Queen-

Regent, to the Burgundian side ; she was recognized by the partisans of the Duke, who disbanded his troops in December, 1417. But the Parisian revolt against the Armagnacs in the following year, which restored to Burgundy his supremacy in France, initiated a complete reversal of his English policy. The Duke himself entered Paris on June 14, 1418, and his claim to represent in his person the King and Government of France was a declaration of war upon Henry and a repudiation of the Treaty of Calais. He could not in his new position afford the least temporization, and he immediately despatched his chamberlains, André des Roches and Antoine de Toulongeoen, with 4,000 men to relieve Rouen, which was then hard pressed by the English. The Governor of the city, who was of pronounced Burgundian sympathies, relied entirely on the promise of the Duke to send further help as time went on. Moreover, Henry had undertaken a heavier task than his forces could well accomplish now that Burgundy had gone over to the national side. Slow though the Duke proved in redeeming his promises of succour to the devoted garrison, yet in October, 1418, he made extensive preparations for raising the siege. While his levies were assembling he opened negotiations with Henry through the medium of the Bishop of Beauvais, who was empowered to advance offers of a definitive peace. The Dauphin thought he could give better terms than Burgundy, and his envoys reached Henry about the same time as those of the Duke. The King of England saw in this action a glorious opportunity for gaining time to complete the reduction of Rouen, which was now in sore straits. He kept the Bishop busy with pointless discussions, and on November 14, 1418, an English embassy, under the leadership of Henry, Archbishop of Canterbury, was

appointed to wait on the Dauphin.¹ The Archbishop had received powers to promise that Henry was willing to bind himself not to make any alliance with the Duke of Burgundy from the present until the Feast of the Circumcision following. This was apparently a more definite offer than the King had been prepared to make on October 26.² In vol. ii. of the Proceedings of the Privy Council, p. 350, is to be found the article which Henry submitted for the consideration of the Council, and he explains therein the reasons which moved him to take this step. In addition to the motive already noted, there was the anxiety to effect some satisfactory settlement which would obviate the necessity of conquering the whole of France piecemeal. The state of Normandy also caused him extreme solicitude. Very few of the nobility joined him, and this salient fact had a dangerous effect upon the thin crust of popular loyalty. Since the Duke of Burgundy had failed him, he hoped to obtain an honourable settlement with the Dauphin. He was well aware that the Dauphin would have nothing whatever to do with any terms which involved the renunciation on his part of the French Crown, and therefore Henry hoped only for a peace on condition that the English possessions as they stood at the Treaty of Bretigny should be restored, with the addition of that part of Normandy which was still unsubdued, Guienne, and the Marches of Calais. The Dauphin, on his part, could not forget that the assistance of the English would enable him to defeat the designs of Burgundy, who now had in his power the King, Queen, and Princess of France. As the reward for giving the Dauphin the controlling voice in French affairs, Henry intended to claim Flanders. Alluring though this prospect was,

¹ "Fœdera," ix. 646.

² *Ibid.*, p. 626.

provided that the consent of the Dauphin was secured for it, Henry was nevertheless deterred by the consideration that by thus joining the Dauphin he would condemn his own pretensions to the throne of France, while he was painfully aware, on the other hand, that this repudiation of his claims would render it impossible for Burgundy to pay him homage for Flanders if that dignitary were to reverse his policy a second time and make overtures to him as King of France. Moreover, he had concluded with the Duke a treaty for Flanders which was to continue until the Easter of 1419, and this agreement precluded definitely any possibility of an invasion of Flanders before that date.¹

While these things were being debated, Burgundy was on the move. He assembled his troops at Beauvais on December 29, 1418. They were a half-hearted conglomeration, who grumbled at being called out in mid-winter, and seized every opportunity to slip away. This fact also whittled away the determination of the Duke, an eventuality which Henry's astuteness had apparently foreseen, for he summarily broke off the negotiations with both parties a few days before the expected fall of Rouen. The 2,000 Burgundian troops which finally reached the outskirts of the starving city were easily disposed of, and on December 31 Henry agreed with alacrity to the proposal of the citizens that they should surrender if the Duke sent no aid within the ensuing fortnight. But Burgundy left the city to its fate, and on January 19 Rouen fell, and Henry became master of Normandy with little trouble. Secure in Normandy, he reopened negotiations with Burgundy and the Dauphin, but his intentions were sincere only with regard to the former. He was anxious to have

¹ See Goodwin, "History of Henry V.," pp. 193, 194.

the commercial treaty between England and Flanders renewed, and was also influenced by the fact that Burgundy had the disposal of the hand of the Princess Catharine. On May 20 Henry commissioned William Bardolf to treat for the renewal of the Flemish truce,¹ and nine days later the King in person met John of Burgundy and Queen Isabella at Meulan. Isabella was accompanied by the Princess Catharine, who had already been promised to Henry by the Duke, along with the territories of 1360. But Henry continually increased his claims, and with tremendous lack of insight refused to guarantee the consent of the English Parliament to the prospective treaty. Burgundy, who thoroughly distrusted Henry, would go no further without this promise. As soon as this deadlock occurred the Dauphin saw his opportunity, and struck hard and immediately. He had conceived the idea of separating Burgundy and Henry for ever by one of the most ruinous diplomatic strokes of which history gives record. He sent to the Duke at Pontoise, and made the alluring offer of the control of the King's Council if he would shake off the English and show himself a true patriot. Burgundy jumped at the proposal. He was utterly sick of Henry's avarice, and leaving his schemes for a general treaty with England² to take care of themselves, he abandoned the conference and hurried to meet the Dauphin. Prince and Duke agreed to be good and loyal kinsmen, and for the future to act in concert for resistance to the "damnable enterprises" of the English. The Burgundian forces assembled at Troyes, while the Dauphin took up his position at Montereau. The Duke invited the heir of France to visit him, but the Dauphin sent back the request that the meeting should take

¹ "Fœdera," ix. 754.

² *Ibid.*, p. 760 *et seq.*

place in the camp at Montereau. On September 9 Burgundy, forgetful of the duplicity of his enemies, which on this occasion excelled even the high standard he maintained himself, met the Dauphin on the Bridge of Montereau. As he knelt to do homage to the future King of France he was struck down. The death of John the Fearless at Montereau made Henry V. Regent and Henry VI. King of France.

IV

THE rash and senseless crime committed by the Dauphin begins a revolutionary phase in the relations of England and Burgundy. The new Duke, Philip the Good, was forced into the arms of the English, and the Anglo-Burgundian alliance, which was the outcome of the affair at Montereau, lasted for fifteen years, during which France was split up a second time into two hostile territories by the line of the Loire. The North was in the hands of the English and the Burgundians, while the South gave a certain amount of support to the Dauphin. The period which extends from 1420 to the Peace of Arras in 1435 is one of extraordinary interest, owing to the fact that in it can be observed one more definite step in the gradual progress of the Dukes of Burgundy from their state of vassalage to the French Monarchy to the acquisition by the last of their line of independent sovereignty in all but name. The career of Philip the Good shows a marked advance in its initial stage, but the central and later years of his reign demonstrate what a long and difficult task it was to withdraw such a state as the Burgundian Dukes were in process of forming to a position outside the radius both of traditional influences and of that feudal magnetism which was still in operation with but slightly diminished power. Although Philip acted during this time practically as an independent sovereign in alliance with the true King of France against the rebel Charles, "the soi-disant Dauphin," still, when the spur of personal advantage had lost its

force owing to the simple fact that there was nothing more to be gained on French soil, the Duke was compelled slowly but surely to give way to the hereditary and national tendencies which he had kept in the background for so long.

Philip, Count of Charolais, was at Ghent when the news of his father's assassination reached him. He gave vent to the most intense expressions of rage and grief, but did not allow his feelings to carry him completely away. A Council was summoned of the most eminent men of Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres, which were the wealthiest and most important cities under his rule, and it was ominous for the future of France that Philip there and then, without waiting for the consent of his suzerain, the King of France, assumed the dignity of Count of Flanders and Duke of Burgundy.¹ At Lille, a short time afterwards, he explicitly declared his intention of coming to terms with the English, and at once despatched an embassy to procure a provisional truce for the Burgundian domains during the forthcoming negotiations.² The embassy, which consisted of the Bishop of Arras and the Lord de Toulongeon, obtained from Henry, who was then at Rouen, the necessary agreement, while the Dauphin, who appears to have prognosticated with accuracy the future policy of Philip the Good, made use of the lull in affairs to attack the Burgundians at Compiègne,³ thus hastening the inevitable end. On October 17 the Duke of Burgundy, accompanied by Sir John de Luxembourg and several nobles, arrived at Rouen for a short conference with the King of England. Meanwhile the Parisians sent to inquire the intentions of the Duke, and both they and his own nobility ex-

¹ Monstrelet (Trans. Johnes.), vol. ii., pp. 257, 258.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

pressed their willingness to support him if he entered into an alliance with the English, since he had now obtained the permission of Charles VI. Burgundy followed up his efforts by another embassy to Rouen, and the proposals which were advanced apparently gratified Henry, who promised to send his representatives to interview the Duke. On St. Andrew's Day following he gave directions to the Bishop of Rochester and the Earls of Warwick and Kent to proceed to Arras to lay his demands before the Duke of Burgundy.¹ The negotiations proved so satisfactory to both sides that King and Duke agreed to a treaty, provided that the King and Ministers of France would become consenting parties.² Meanwhile Philip issued orders to his troops to take no offensive action with regard to the English, but his forces in Artois and Picardy were mobilized under Sir John de Luxemburgh to operate against the Dauphin. He also sent a force to recapture Roye, and was aided in this enterprise by the Earl of Huntingdon with 2,000 English troops. Cordial relations had now been established between England and Burgundy, and a general truce was proclaimed from Paris to Boulogne, and to Troyes in Champagne.³

The next step in which the Duke displayed his changed feelings was his siege of Crespy, with a force consisting of Burgundians and a few thousand English who had joined him at St. Quentin.⁴ The culminating point was reached when the Duke met the English ambassadors at Troyes on May 21, 1420, and the celebrated treaty was signed which made France a dependency of the English Crown, with the reservation that Charles VI. was to remain King

¹ Monstrelet, ii. 260.

² *Ibid.*, p. 261.

³ Rymer, "Foedera," ix. 825, 840.

⁴ Monstrelet, ii. 267.

during his life, while Henry assumed the position of Regent. The treaty made Philip virtually a vassal of the King of England. One of the articles of the compact provided that those of the Burgundian party who had suffered by Henry's campaigns in Normandy were to be compensated by the grant of lands to be conquered from "our rebellious subjects,"¹ the Dauphin and his adherents. This provision was, of course, meant to conciliate any hostility towards Henry which might still remain in the ranks of the Duke's followers. Further, Henry and Philip undertook jointly to provide for the security and maintenance of Charles VI. according to his dignity, and both swore solemnly never to make any treaty with Charles, the "pseudo-Dauphin." The English deputies delivered a copy of the treaty to Henry, and he set out for Troyes to complete the union of France and England by his marriage with the Princess Catharine. As he approached the town, "the Duke of Burgundy, to show him respect and honour, came out to meet him, and conducted him to his hostel."² Councils were held for the ratification of the treaty, and the Duke was present at the ceremony which made Catharine Queen of England.³ When the festivities were ended, the new allies turned to the serious work of systematically reducing the fortresses which still held out for the Dauphin. Sens and Montereau were first attacked by Henry and Philip in conjunction; but in July, 1420, Henry commissioned Burgundy to take sole command of the siege of Melun.⁴ After the surrender of that town, Charles VI. and Henry, accompanied by the Dukes of Burgundy,

¹ Monstrelet, ii. 281; Cosneau, "Les Grands Traités de la Guerre de Cent Ans," pp. 109, 112, 113.

² Monstrelet, ii. 277.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Rymer, "Fœdera," x. 4.

Bedford, and Clarence, proceeded to Paris, where they were received by the populace with great demonstrations of joy. Charles entered with Henry on his right, while Philip rode on his left clad in deep mourning. A Court of Inquiry was at once instituted to investigate the circumstances of the late Duke's death. Henry and Charles were appointed judges,¹ and they passed the unanimous sentence that the murderers of John the Fearless were convicted of the crime of *lèse majesté*, and were henceforth declared traitors to the Crown of France.

On December 27 Henry left Paris for England, where, according to Monstrelet, he was received like an "angel from God," but in March, 1421, the disaster at Beaugé called him back to give the finishing touches to his life-work. He arrived in Paris in July, and, supported by Burgundy, took the field for his last campaign. After the surrender of Meaux he was overtaken by his mortal illness. He lay for three weeks at Vincennes, and when he perceived that his end was near he summoned his brother Bedford and the other councillors to his bedside to give them his final instructions. Henry was probably aware that at his death his great enterprise would fall to nothing, but he was anxious that the French dominions should remain in English hands for as long as possible. He could not have been blind to the artificial position of the Duke of Burgundy, and for this reason advised that the Regency of France should be offered to Philip. He impressed upon his hearers the supreme necessity of humouring the latter, and they were finally adjured to make no peace with Charles the Dauphin which did not leave Normandy entirely in English hands. One of Henry's last exhortations was prophetic in the extreme. He was well aware of the character of Humphrey of

¹ Rymer, "Fœdera," x. 6.

Gloucester, and solemnly warned him not to prefer his personal ambitions to the welfare of the nation,¹ and in the events which ensued his fears were fully realized. The death of Henry V. deprived the English cause in France of that central personality upon which the whole enterprise depended. From this date, in spite of the heroic efforts of the Regent Bedford, and of the victories which seemed to revive once more the days of Henry V., the English rule was doomed. While the obsequies of the dead King were being performed Philip proceeded to Paris. He had only visited the English camp on business, and had no desire to be present at the death scene. He held a short conference with the Dukes, and refused the Regency during the minority of Henry VI. He, however, took a new oath to observe the provisions of Troyes.² At the very moment when the funeral cortège of Henry V. passed through the gates of Rouen Charles VI. of France entered Paris to die. On October 21, 1422, Henry VI. and Charles VII. became Kings of France.

There is no necessity in this short treatise to follow the Anglo-Burgundian troops in their sieges, marches, and counter-marches, and alternate defeat and victory. The main point of the period is the gradual return of the Duke of Burgundy to the French side, a development which may almost be said to have begun on the death-bed of Charles VI. From the very day of his accession Charles VII. occupied himself with a consistent effort to separate Philip the Good from the English alliance. The ultimate success of this policy was due in no small degree to the King's mother-in-law, Yolande of Aragon, who concentrated all her diplomacy and persuasive

¹ Waurin, Chron., p. 423.

² Lavisde, "Hist. de France," iv. 390.

power to bring the influence of Amadeus VIII. of Savoy, Burgundy's uncle, as well as that of John V. of Brittany, and his brother Arthur of Richemont, to bear upon the Duke.¹ Even before the year 1422 had run its course the party of "the King of Bourges" had been holding conferences to form a basis for future negotiations between Philip and his French suzerain. On May 18, 1424, exactly a month after the Triple Alliance between Burgundy, Bedford, and Brittany had been established, Queen Yolande arrived at Nantes, and a little later the Duke of Brittany signed a truce with the French King.² Finally Yolande achieved the complete adhesion of Brittany by conferring upon Arthur of Richemont the sword of Constable. The English and Burgundians were also approached, but the only effect of these negotiations was to bind the allies temporarily still closer together. Thus the diplomacy of Charles VII. was for the moment frustrated, but he had inserted the thin end of the wedge, and the Burgundians, even if their Duke remained obstinate, were bound sooner or later to incline a favourable ear to his overtures. Charles was assisted by the fact that the Treaty of Troyes had caused an irremediable split in the Burgundian ranks, for the supporters of the Duke found their views extremely modified by the realization of what they had signed away to the English. The section that preferred the rule of Henry VI. to that of the Armagnacs was in a decided minority. Most of the Burgundians had hoped that the Treaty of Troyes would set up a government which would prove capable of restoring peace and order in Northern France. What they really obtained was the stringent

¹ Cosneau, "Les Grands Traités de la Guerre de Cent Ans," Intro. to Arras.

² De Beaucourt, "Hist. de Charles VII.," ii. 353, 356.

rule of Bedford without any compensating advantages, and their low murmur of discontent was a presage of disaster to come.

But for the present the sky seemed clear, and the Dukes of Bedford, Burgundy, and Brittany met at Amiens, on April 17, 1424, to seal once more the compact of Troyes.¹ The Triple Alliance formed between the Dukes has been already alluded to; they formed an agreement for mutual support, which was consolidated by the marriage of Bedford to Anne of Burgundy and that of Arthur of Richemont to Margaret, another sister of Philip the Good. Burgundy emphasized the sincerity of his intentions by granting to the new Duchess of Bedford as her dowry the County of Artois, which was to devolve upon her issue by the Duke. On the conclusion of the marriage ceremony Bedford and Burgundy returned to Paris together. But while affairs were progressing so smoothly in France, a cloud came across the horizon, this time blown from the English quarter. Its source was the ill-timed ambition of Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, to become Duke of Holland and Hainault in the right of his wife, the exiled Countess. Few of the romantic episodes of history are tinged with such pathos as the career of the unfortunate Jacqueline of Hainault. She was the only daughter and heiress of William of Bavaria, Count of Hainault, by his marriage with Margaret, sister of John the Fearless, and had entered into her heritage on the death of her father in 1417. Her dominions were coveted by John and his successor, Philip the Good, and while the former contented himself with indirect means for the extinction of the House of Hainault, Philip determined to rid himself of Jacqueline by fair devices or foul. His machina-

¹ Rymer, "Fœdera," x. 280. Monstrelet, ii. 391.

tions resulted in the flight of the Countess to England, ever the refuge of the afflicted alien. Henry V. received her favourably, and assigned for her maintenance an income of £100, to be paid to her annually from the lands of Joanna, late Queen of England,¹ a grant which was subsequently renewed by Henry VI. in October, 1422. The Countess soon attracted the attentions of Humphrey of Gloucester, who at once formed the idea of marrying Jacqueline and claiming her troubled heritage. The Spanish Antipope, Benedict XIII., annulled the marriage of Jacqueline with John IV. of Brabant, and she was married to Gloucester in October, 1422.² A year later she was denized by Royal Letters,³ at the same time as a similar dignity was conferred upon Anne of Burgundy, Duchess of Bedford; the fine upon these letters was remitted by the command of the King.⁴ By this stroke of policy Gloucester dealt the death-blow to English interests abroad. He now entered deliberately into competition with Philip of Burgundy for the possession of Hainault, a piece of effrontery which Philip regarded as absolutely intolerable.

The French rejoiced at the split in the Anglo-Burgundian alliance, and letters were forged, probably at the instigation of Arthur de Richemont,⁵ proving that Bedford was really in secret complicity with his brother, and was actually plotting his assassination. Desplanque, in the "Memoires de l'Académie de Bruxelles," publishes these forgeries, which are obtained from the Lille

¹ Rymer, "Fœdera," x. 134; "Wars of English in France" (Rolls Series), i. 381; Proceedings of Privy Council, ii. 291.

² "Particularités Curieuses sur Jacq. d'Hainault," Mons, p. 58.

³ Rymer, "Fœdera," x. 311; "English in France," i. 399.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Cosneau, "Arthur de Richemont," pp. 501-503.

Archives, and discusses their bearing upon the question whether there was a plot formed between 1424 and 1426 by Gloucester, Suffolk, Salisbury, and others, for the assassination of the Duke of Burgundy. The three nobles mentioned were notoriously inimical to the Duke for diverse reasons : Salisbury had a particular grudge against him, excited by the pronounced and compromising attentions which Philip had paid to the Countess of Salisbury, Eleanor Holland, at an entertainment given by Burgundy in Artois. Desplanque maintains the absolute reality of the plot, and cites seven documents, amongst them letters purporting to be written by Gloucester to Suffolk, and also the incriminating deposition of a certain William Benoit, a prisoner in Lille Castle. The assertion that Bedford was an accomplice is palpably ridiculous. No one who considers the consummate intelligence of that distinguished warrior and diplomatist can ever imagine that he would have been a party to such a ludicrous scheme. Moreover, Bedford's personal activities themselves deny the insinuation. Although he requested the legitimate Pope, Martin V., to legitimize the marriage, he exhausted himself in his efforts to restrain the ruinous ambition of his brother. He joined Burgundy in requesting Gloucester to submit to arbitration.

But while the preparations for mediation were in progress, Humphrey collected a force of 5,000 men, and crossed with Jacqueline to Calais on October 16, 1424, for the conquest of Hainault.¹ A few weeks later he entered his wife's possessions, having taken scrupulous care not to inflict any damage upon the Burgundian domains which he crossed *en route*. Gloucester even

¹ Monstrelet, ii. 430; "Wars of English in France," ii. 396.

issued strict orders to his troops that all provisions obtained on the march should be paid for. By this action he demonstrated the fact that his brother's advice had not been wholly lost upon him. On the arrival of their Duke and Duchess, the principal towns of Hainault paid their fickle homage.¹ From Mons Humphrey wrote an indignant letter to the Duke of Burgundy, in which he accuses him of obvious injustice in issuing orders to Sir John of Luxemburgh to support the Duke of Brabant. "Philip's memory was indeed short if he had already forgotten what Gloucester had done for him in times past. The failure of the arbitration was due to the Duke of Brabant, and if proximity of lineage was the plea which Philip advanced for his support of Brabant, it was plainly ridiculous, since Jacqueline was his cousin by two distinct lines. Moreover, the Treaty of Troyes ought to have had more influence over the Duke of Burgundy than appeared by his actions. He was only claiming the heritage that was his by right, and his present war-array was really the result of the offensive taken by Brabant. When he gave impartial consideration to all the points in his favour, he could scarcely credit the report that Burgundy had issued those instructions to his captain. Personally, he was going to defend his just rights to the last."² Such were the sentiments expressed in the compilation which reached Philip.

Burgundy laid the letter before his Council, and after some delay despatched an answer to Gloucester, confirming officially all the reports which the latter had heard. "The insulting aspersions with which Humphrey's letter was so liberally sprinkled he would not tolerate from him or any other person, and to avoid

¹ Monstrelet, ii. 430.

² *Ibid.*, p. 432.

the necessity of public warfare he was prepared to decide the matter personally in the lists, with the Emperor, or, if Gloucester preferred it, with Bedford as adjudicator."¹ Meanwhile the Duke of Brabant had taken the field against Gloucester, and had stormed the town of Braine, in Hainault, with the satisfaction of knowing that his cause was supported by the Pope, who denied any confirmation on his part of the marriage of Gloucester and Jacqueline.² At a meeting with Burgundy which took place at Doullens, Bedford disclaimed any connection on his part or on that of the English Government with the schemes of Gloucester, and effectually persuaded Philip to abandon his prospective duel.³ The protestations and the unrelaxing efforts of Bedford⁴ were eventually supplemented by the hopeless failure of Gloucester himself. The Hainaulters, cheered by the presence of Brabant, deserted the unhappy Jacqueline in a body, with the exception of the town of Mons, which remained loyal for a short time longer, only to prove ultimately more traitorous than the rest. Gloucester, disheartened by his reverses, returned to England, leaving his wife to the tender mercies of the citizens of Mons, who soon after surrendered her to the Duke, with whom she was forced to make the Treaty of 1433, which has already been considered.⁵

In this way the cowardly conduct of Gloucester and the mediation of Bedford averted the threatening storm, but the affair had created a breach which at best could only be concealed. The work of Charles VII. was

¹ Monstrelet, ii. 434, 437, 439.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 441, 444.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 450, 253, 256.

⁴ "Wars of English in France," vol. i., Preface, p. lxxxii.

⁵ *Vide* Introduction, p. 9.

daily becoming easier. Another outburst on the part of Gloucester now called Bedford over to England. When he left Paris Burgundy had been pacified, but the capture of Le Mans by the Earl of Salisbury on August 2, 1425, was the last real conquest made in the name of Henry VI. While Bedford was engaged in mediating between Beaufort and Gloucester in England, the latter made another attempt to revive his claim to Hainault. The small force which was despatched under Lord Fitzwalter was destroyed by the Burgundians at Brouwershaven on January 19, 1426. This feeble enterprise does not seem to have had any effect on Burgundy, who kept up a constant connection with Bedford while he was away from France,¹ and the ambassadors received the usual costly presents. On July 14, 1426, the Council determined that they should jointly receive £200, and that each should have of the King's bounty twelve yards of scarlet cloth ; the deputies of the Four Members were accorded the same liberal treatment.² Ambassadors also proceeded at intervals from England to keep in touch with Burgundy.³ These marks of favour were needed, as Gloucester was ever on the watch for his opportunity, in spite of his promise to Bedford. On July 9, 1427, the Commons granted a relief to the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester which amounted to 20,000 marks, to be raised from various sources.⁴ The Duke had apparently sent an embassy to Burgundy, then at Arras, to inquire into his intentions with regard to Jacqueline, and letters of safe-guard, as distinguished from safe-conduct, were granted

¹ "Fœdera," x. 352.

² Proceedings of the Privy Council, iii. 200.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

⁴ "Fœdera," x. 374.

to the envoys whom Philip sent in return.¹ The money obtained from Parliament was employed in the retention of men-at-arms for the proposed expedition of the Duke of Gloucester to Holland.² The significance of all these preparations was not lost upon Burgundy, and they did little to increase his already none too cordial relations with Bedford.

Although the latter had been desperately anxious to return to France, he was prevented from leaving England until March, 1427. He at once began to press the French in the South and West. Brittany made peace, but the English now received their first decided check in the crushing defeat of Warwick by the Bastard of Orleans. In August, 1428, they made their last advance. Salisbury moved against Orleans with the ridiculous force of 4,000 men, and partially blockaded the town. The siege dragged on from October, 1428, to April, 1429, when the appearance of Jeanne d'Arc roused the French nation from the apathy into which it had fallen. The tide of success which found its source in the Maid of Orleans had more serious consequences for the English cause than at first appeared. The revival of the fortunes of France was the salient fact which impressed itself upon the Duke of Burgundy, and although it was due to his troops that the danger was for a time averted by the capture of the Maid at Compiègne by Sir John de Luxemburgh in May, 1430,³ yet, long before this date, the Duke had been coquetting with the enemy. Bedford had therefore to resort to the ignoble artifice of bribing him to stand fast to the

¹ Proceedings of the Privy Council, iii. 275.

² *Ibid.*, ii. 276.

³ Monstrelet, ii. 541; Proceedings of the Privy Council, Preface, p. xv.

English side, a measure which in reality only precipitated the defection of the Duke. In July, 1429, Philip concluded a truce with Charles, which was the result of the conferences of Arras and of Compiègne, conducted by the mediation of Amadeus of Savoy, who was supported by Papal influence, as well as that of the Council of Basle.¹ In October Bedford made over to Burgundy the government of the districts of Melun, Chartres, Amiens, the Vermandois, and Ponthieu, together with the charge of the city of Paris. That part of Champagne² which still clung to Henry VI., as well as the whole of Picardy, were thus ceded to Burgundy. Philip was once more ostensibly a firm ally, and in the following campaign his forces rendered signal services in the manner already described. But it appears that he did not forget to charge for them: 25,000 nobles were paid to the Duke for the 1,500 men he had used in various expeditions, while the veteran Burgundian captain, Sir John de Luxemburgh, also benefited considerably.³

While Jeanne d'Arc was being tried at Rouen, English and Burgundians were busy in an attempt to stay the French advance, which had resulted upon the enthusiastic conduct of the Maid. Henry VI. was crowned at Paris on December 6, 1431, but it was significant that very few of the Burgundian nobles were present at the ceremony. A week later the Cardinal of Santa Croce, who had been commissioned by Eugenius IV. to mediate between the conflicting parties, obtained at Lille a truce for six years between the French and Burgun-

¹ Cosneau, "Les Grands Traités," Intro. to Arras.

² "Foëdera," x. 454.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 454, 460, 481; *Proceedings of the Privy Council*, Preface, p. xv.

dians,¹ but there was some consolation for the English in the fact that scarcely six months of the "peace" had elapsed before they were fighting as hard as ever.² Even in 1433 an impolitic attempt on the part of Charles VII. upon the Burgundian possessions led to a protraction of the English day of grace. Still, it was now only a matter of a very short time at best. The last bond which kept Philip to the English side was snapped by the death of Anne of Burgundy, Duchess of Bedford, on October 13, 1432.³ Her loss was a serious blow to Bedford, who perceived very clearly that her death would be a factor of considerable importance in view of the correspondence which was continually passing between Philip and Charles VII.⁴ Moreover, Philip the Good had now realized that he had obtained all he could reasonably hope for in the way of territorial expansion at the expense of France, and that it was to his own advantage to make peace with Charles on terms which would secure him what he had gained. His inclinations towards France were still further accelerated by what proved to be an exceedingly impolitic act on the part of Bedford. With a view to resuming the personal bond with Burgundy, he married, perhaps too precipitately, Jacquette of Luxemburg,⁵ daughter of the Count of St. Pol, and niece of the Bishop of Therouenne, Chancellor for Henry VI. in France, and of the famous Sir John de Luxemburg. The result of the marriage was the diametrical opposite of what Bedford had hoped. The Duke professed himself dis-

¹ Cosneau, "Les Grands Traités," Intro. to Arras; Proceedings of the Privy Council, vol. iv., Preface, p. lxxv.

² *Ibid.*

³ Monstrelet, iii. 51.

⁴ Cosneau, "Les Grands Traités," Intro. to Arras.

⁵ Monstrelet, iii. 58.

pleased at the match, presumably because he had not been consulted, or because he regarded as insufficient the interval which separated the marriage from his sister's death. But it was evident that he had long been searching for some tangible excuse for turning his back on the English, and this is the only reasonable explanation of the attitude which he assumed.

In May, 1433, Burgundy had given unmistakable signs of his approaching defection. After Bedford's marriage, efforts to conciliate him were vain. The two Dukes agreed to meet at St. Omer to discuss the situation. When they arrived, and were preparing for the conference, a singular outburst of petulance on the part of Burgundy resulted in the abandonment of the interview, in spite of the energetic efforts of Cardinal Beaufort and the nobles.¹ The ambassadors of Charles VII. made good use of their opportunities, and on September 17, 1434, they concluded a truce with Burgundy at Ham.² Bedford, who had made one more visit to England, now returned to Paris. His presence was badly needed, for the English troops stood alone against the French, and Paris itself was longing for the re-entry of the army of Charles VII. In February, 1435, the removal of the English headquarters to Rouen was a confession of failure, while Philip delivered to the English Council a direct intimation that he had agreed to arrange a settlement with the French. In the previous month he had met the envoys of Charles VII. at the conference of Nevers, and had committed himself to use his efforts to secure a general peace. If the English continued obstinate, Burgundy would have no alternative but to desert them. As his reward, he was to receive "the

¹ Monstrelet, iii. 59.

² Cosneau, "Les Grands Traités," Intro. to Arras.

Somme Towns," with Montreuil and Doullens, a grant which meant the severance of practically the whole of Picardy from the French Crown. In order to impart an air of legality to his actions Philip conducted his negotiations quite openly, and invited the English authorities to send representatives to the Conference, which was to take place at Arras in the following July. His efforts were seconded by the Pope and the Council of Basle. In May, 1435, Burgundy despatched Sir Hugh de Lannoy and the Provost of St. Omer to inform Henry of the proximity of the Conference,¹ and as he could not reasonably refuse to hear the terms of the general peace which it was fervently hoped would ensue, Henry nominated as ambassadors Cardinal Beaufort, Kemp, Archbishop of York, the Earls of Suffolk and Huntingdon, and the Counts of St. Pol and Ligny,² as well as the Duke of Burgundy himself, who was expected to consider the honour as binding him to the English side of the question.

The Convention at Arras has been described with truth as one of the most celebrated in history, both from the number of the dignitaries who were present and from the tremendous issues which were at stake. The English Government appears to have been genuinely anxious to come to some terms with Charles VII. It had become painfully apparent that, unless some settlement were made, the English could not remain much longer in France, and the English leaders were willing to accede to any agreement which would leave in their hands at any rate the greater part of what they had won. As a further inducement to the French King, Cardinal Beaufort was empowered to treat for the marriage of

¹ Proceedings of the Privy Council, iv. 301.

² "Fœdera," x. 611; Monstrelet.

Henry VI. with the eldest or any other daughter of Charles VII.¹ July was drawing to a close when the deputies of the Pope, the Kings of England, France, Norway, Denmark, Sicily, and several other States—such was the universal interest in the issue of the deliberations—arrived at Arras, and found the Duke of Burgundy ready to receive them, surrounded by the regal magnificence of his Court.² The French made up for their comparative feebleness in the wars by an inherent capacity for the art of diplomacy, and they were not long in bringing the powerful influence of commonsense to bear upon the wavering Burgundian party. A merely accidental observation of a Burgundian knight is stated to have been responsible for the sudden awakening of his countrymen to the full realization of their anomalous position.³ French and Burgundians now strained every nerve to effect a full reconciliation, and the former made good use of the festivities which preceded the serious business of the Conference in cultivating the favour of the Duke. The confidence with which Burgundy's attitude towards their advances inspired the French contrasted sharply with the uneasy conduct of the English.⁴ The appearance of Beaufort on August 19 failed to create any marked improvement, and a few days later the Conference was opened by the Cardinal of St. Croix, who delivered with great eloquence and fervour an oration in favour of peace. On one point, however, the English were determined to make no concession. They refused with emphasis the French demand that Henry VI. should relinquish the title of King of France. The dead-lock resulted in the with-

¹ "Fœdera," x. 633, 634.

² Proceedings of the Privy Council, vol. iv., Preface.

³ Monstrelet, vol. iii.

⁴ *Ibid.*

drawal of the English ambassadors with the full conviction that Burgundy would not be much longer the ally of England. There has also been an attempt to explain the hasty departure of the English as being the result of a rumour that a secret conspiracy had been formed against them.

The fears of the English were very soon realized. Bedford's death on September 14, 1435, removed the last of Burgundy's scruples, and about a fortnight later he definitely threw over the English alliance. On September 25, 1435, he broke the oath which he had sworn at Troyes by his peace with Charles VII. He added insult to injury by despatching two heralds to England a few days later to announce the satisfactory conclusion of the Franco-Burgundian treaty, and to make an attempt at inducing Henry to follow his example. The English King refused to receive the Duke's ambassador into his own presence or that of the Council. Popular fury blazed so strongly in support of the action of the Government that the Burgundian envoys were glad to escape from London with their lives. It was a matter for remark that the Duke's letters no longer styled Henry King of France nor acknowledged him as Sovereign. Their contents excited the profound astonishment of the Council, and brought tears to the eyes of the over-susceptible monarch. Throughout England the actions of the Duke were regarded as nothing short of rank treason, and the storm of indignation which was aroused vented itself upon the Flemish merchants settled in London, many of whom were murdered. The Council met to discuss the situation, and it was decided to vouchsafe no reply to the Duke, who was informed by his envoys of the sentiments of the English Government and people, as well as of the fixed intention of

the King, with God's permission, soon to provide a remedy.¹ While England was in a turmoil, Philip and Charles were busy with the final touches to their new alliance. Philip was fully prepared for consequences of his defection, and he made active preparations to begin the war which was to drive the English out of France. The ignoble disaster which attended Philip's schemes removed a powerful ally from the French camp, but once the Burgundian balance of power had disappeared, the English chances, poor enough before, became absolutely hopeless. The Treaty of Troyes had consolidated the edifice of English empire in France ; at the Peace of Arras it crumbled into ruins.

¹ Proceedings of the Privy Council, Preface, vol. iv.

V

PHILIP of Burgundy had doubtless intended, after the conclusion of the Treaty of Arras, to retire altogether from the Anglo-French dispute, in order to pursue the easy course of a profitable neutrality. He was aware of the fact that he had too long neglected the internal affairs of his heterogeneous domains, and had determined to devote the rest of his time to the consolidation and administration of Burgundy. He was still conscious and proud of his connection with the French Monarchy, and regarded himself in the last resort as a vassal of the French Crown, an attitude in which he stands in sharp contrast to his more spirited successor, Charles le Téméraire. But whatever Philip's intentions were in 1435, the English people did not mean to leave the issue of his action at Arras long in doubt. He was forced against his will into war with England, and his warmest supporters were, logically enough, the inhabitants of the Flemish towns, whose representatives in England had suffered so severely at the hands of the infuriated Londoners. After a short period of activity, in which he suffered a demoralizing defeat, Philip retired to the accomplishment of his original ambition. The restoration of the old commercial *status quo* between England and Flanders could not have been delayed for long, and at the end of our period we fall back again upon the condition of affairs with which the reign of Henry IV. concluded—a purely commercial relationship between England and the Flemish portion of the Burgundian

domains. The two outstanding features of these last years of the period are the Siege of Calais by Philip the Good, and the new commercial alliance established by the mediation of Isabella of Portugal, Duchess of Burgundy. Isabella had been married to Philip of Burgundy early in 1430. She was a daughter of King John I. of Portugal,¹ and cousin to Henry VI., whom she visited while on her way from Portugal to Flanders. Henry received her with great favour, and the sum of £100 was apportioned by the Council for the expenses of attending her to her destination.² She exercised, as Margaret of Flanders had done before her, a tremendous influence upon Burgundian affairs, and owing to her Anglo-Portuguese extraction, inclined towards alliance with England. To her was due almost solely the reconciliation between England and Flanders, which meant so much for the trade and prosperity of both countries.

The first duty which claimed Philip's attention after Arras was an affair of conscience. That the oath to which he and the rest of the Burgundian nobles had subscribed at Troyes weighed heavily upon them is conclusively testified by the statement made by a Burgundian knight named De Lannoy to the effect that during the course of the war no less than five truces had been sworn to, none of which had been kept. He, however, now swore a doubly solemn oath that this last one made at Arras should be kept to the letter.³ Both

¹ John of Gaunt = Blanche of Lancaster.

Philippe = John I. of Portugal.

Isabella = Philip the Good.

² Proceedings of the Privy Council, vol. iv., Preface, p. iii.

³ Monstrelet, ii. 119, ed. 1809.

Philip and the rest of his party had been solemnly absolved from the promises made at the Treaty of Troyes by the Cardinal of St. Croix, but this wholesale absolution must have appeared most superficial and reprehensible even to those persons who presumably benefited by it. Henry, it appears, had been long apprehensive of some such attempt as this to absolve the Duke from his allegiance, and had already made inquiries at the Papal Court. He received on July 16, 1435, a reassuring letter from Eugenius IV.,¹ who stated that no attempt had yet been made to obtain freedom from his oath for Philip, and that none had been granted to him. It is to be remarked that Henry's appeal to Rome was made when Philip of Burgundy was still acting to all intents and purposes as the Ambassador of the King of England at the Conference of Arras. This general freedom pronounced by proxy was therefore looked upon in England as in no way valid, and the Duke and his supporters were regarded as black traitors to their lawful Sovereign, Henry VI., King of England and France. Philip himself was quite unsatisfied with his position, and his letters to Henry contain palpable confessions of guilt. The high-handed action of the English Council, which was to some extent justifiable, irritated the Duke, and war was now inevitable. But still, even in the early days of 1436, Burgundy's Ministers considered the prevention of hostilities expedient, if possible. Louis de Luxembourg, Archbishop of Rouen, one of the Duke's principal advisers, proceeded to London, and at first it really seemed as though his mission would be successful. But his request for Philip's consent to accede to the conditions proposed by the English Council was answered by the statement that the English had

¹ "Fœdera," x. 620, 625.

forfeited all claim to consideration by their attack upon the town of Ardres,¹ while the so-called "declaratory letters" which were sent by Burgundy to Henry, containing a catalogue of the unpardonable acts of hostility committed by the English in Flanders,² clearly demonstrated the fact that war was unavoidable.

The Duke of Burgundy had already begun his preparations, and had reinforced the troops stationed on his frontiers. Henry strenuously denied the charges which Philip brought up with such assiduity to justify the step he was about to take. Amongst the crimes committed by the English, Philip laid emphasis on the alleged incitement to rebellion issued by the King of England to certain of the towns of the Low Countries. In contradiction of this statement Henry cited his own letter to the Mayor and inhabitants of Zurick Zee, which had merely contained the inquiry as to what the intentions of the latter were with regard to the approaching crisis. It had been written purely in the interests of commerce.³

In the case of the alleged piracy committed by Englishmen who were called "Captains," measures had already been taken for the arrest of the criminals. Instead of the Duke of Gloucester having received any of the plunder, it was well known that he had ordered as much of it as possible to be restored to its rightful owners, and the King had offered to do all justice to the aggrieved burgomasters of Bruges. To the Duke's additional complaint that Henry meditated an alliance with the Emperor which would be prejudicial to Burgundian interests, the King replied that all the world

¹ Monstrelet, ii. 125, ed. 1596.

² Proceedings of the Privy Council, vol. iv., Preface.

³ Monstrelet, vol. ii.

knew that such a treaty was already in existence, and that it had been conscientiously observed since it was made with Sigismund by Henry V. The observation was then made that His Majesty of England, in common with his ancestors, had always considered himself free to enter into alliances with whomsoever he would, and if it pleased God, would always do so in time to come. Finally, the Duke's complaints were so obviously unjust and unusual that it would be inconsistent with honour and dignity to take any notice of them. All Philip's pretences were thus cruelly disposed of, while the attitude assumed by the English Government on the one side, as well as that of the Flemish towns on the other, completely prevented any chance of the modification of Philip's position. War was the one and only vent for the situation. In March, 1436, Burgundy officially declared war upon England, and openly showed his intention of capturing Calais.¹ In order to give still more colour to his actions, he claimed the town as belonging to his own County of Artois. Calais was an exceptionally important position, both politically and commercially. It was the gateway into France and the Continent for English troops and English commerce. England possessed in Dover and Calais fortresses which commanded the Narrow Seas, and the maritime trade between Flanders and the West of Europe and the Mediterranean. This lever on the inclinations of the Flemish England was not prepared to lose without a struggle, and the popular interest which the Siege of Calais aroused in English minds is attested by the enormous number of rhymes and songs to which the incident gave rise. It is extraordinary how often

¹ "Political Poems and Songs" (Rolls Series), ii. 152, 156; Rymer, "Fœdera," x. 646.

Flanders figures in the English popular songs during this period. As an instance of earlier productions may be cited a poem written in the year 1419, which is entitled "A Remembrance of Fifty-two Follies." This production enumerates the stultities of the Flemish, who are alleged to have deserted a real friend (England) for a stranger's sake, and the writer seems to exult in the misfortunes which have overtaken them.¹ A much longer commercial theme is, of course, the "Libel of English Policy."

With regard to the Siege of Calais, however, these political songs demonstrate the fact that Englishmen were slowly becoming alive to the absolute necessity of obtaining and of keeping the command of the seas. The Siege of Calais in 1436 was therefore a circumstance which brought indirectly incalculable benefit to England. The contemporary ballads blend with much sound commercial advice expressions of scorn and detestation directed against the traitor Philip of Burgundy, and remind him of the numerous kindnesses which he had received from Henry V., and of the fealty which he had sworn to him and to his successor. All the Duke's subjects had embarked upon the enterprise with great zeal, and none were keener than the inhabitants of the Four Members and of the other towns of Flanders. The siege began on July 19, 1436. The "Song of the Siege of Calais" relates that "the Duk of Burgeyne off grete prid mad gret assembillè in landès wyd."² A satire written at the same time gives an account of the disgraceful exhibition of cowardice given by the men of Grave-

¹ "Twenty-six Poems from the Oxford Manuscripts," Digby 102, leaf 115, and Douce 322, ed. Dr. J. Kail (Part I.), Early English Text Society.

² "Political Poems and Songs," ii. 152.

lines,¹ Bruges, Ghent, and Picardy at the siege. The Graveliners come in for an especial share of contumely, since they are stated to have behaved like "Lions of Cotswold"—a burlesque name for sheep. In the "Song of the Siege of Calais," to which allusion has already been made, the story of the siege is told in mock-heroic style, and it is affirmed that the Flemish brought 9,000 cocks to crow them on to victory at night, and 8,000 cressets to give them light. Of the Siege of Calais there is not much to relate. The town was vigorously defended by the Earl of Mortain, Sir John Ratcliff, and the Baron of Dudley. The women even worked in the defence, and the French and Flemings were frequently forced to retreat to their own lines closely pursued by the defenders. Burgundy was compelled to raise the siege in less than a week. He retired from Calais on July 25, before the Duke of Gloucester, who had been appointed Captain of Calais, could arrive with reinforcements for the relief of the town. The hurried departure of Philip the Good was due mostly to the astonishingly fickle and craven character of the Flemish levies, whose intense ardour had been completely evaporated by six days' fighting. They melted away without waiting for the permission of their Duke, and their ignominious retreat was followed by the devastation of Western Flanders as far as Poperinghe, Bailleul, and St. Omer by the Duke of Gloucester, who was not, however, equipped for a prolonged foray,² and returned home immediately after this signal success. It is noticeable, with regard to this eventful time, that some communications which had to do with the intended Siege of Calais seem to have passed between Burgundy and James I. of Scotland, who had

¹ *Archæologia*, vol. xxiii.

² "Fœdera," x. 648, 651.

already been involved in negotiations with the French. This correspondence provoked intense indignation in England,¹ and in the war which followed James was decisively overthrown by the Percies and Nevilles on the Border.

The conduct of the Duke of Burgundy was consistently regarded in England as that of a vassal who had turned traitor, and he was now officially treated as such by Henry VI. as King of France. Philip was solemnly declared to have forfeited the possessions which he held of the Crown of France, and Henry considered himself free to dispose of them as best suited his inclination. The County of Boulogne was granted to the Lord de Beaumont on July 27, 1436, only two days after Burgundy's retreat from before Calais,² and on the 30th of the same month Humphrey of Gloucester was created Count of Flanders.³ How these extensive diminutions of his estates affected the peace of mind of Philip the Good we have no means of ascertaining, but it is certain that the new owners were far from being in a position to make good their claim to the dignities which had been bestowed upon them. Henry VI., however, did not forget to maintain friendly relations with those of the dependents of the Duke of Burgundy who had declared themselves neutral. One of these was Arnald, Duke of Gueldres. Henry's policy in this respect was solely due to commercial motives. He was extremely anxious to conciliate all the Low Country powers who could exert any influence in trade matters. In a letter⁴ written to the Duke on July 13, 1435, Henry disclaimed any

¹ "Political Poems and Songs," ii. 150.

² "Fœdera," x. 652.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 652.

⁴ "Correspondence of Bishop Beckington," i. 104, 105.

knowledge of certain letters which were supposed by the Duke to implicate him in the Siege of Calais. The King assured him that, even if any such report had been circulated, he would not have believed it. He accepted as genuine the assurances of friendship that the Duke had made to his uncle, the Cardinal, at Arras.

We have now arrived at the last occasion upon which Philip the Good had any relations with England which were of more than momentary significance. The attempt to reinstate the former commercial concord with England was almost exclusively due to the good offices of the Duchess Isabella, who apparently viewed with great consternation the animosity cherished by the Flemish towards the country which her hereditary associations had taught her to regard with respect and affection. She immediately took steps to remedy a situation which must also incidentally have been instrumental in producing no small deficit in the Burgundian exchequer. On November 23, 1438, Henry VI. consented, at the request of the Duchess, to send ambassadors, who were to effect, in conjunction with the representatives of Philip of Burgundy, a restoration of the commercial relations which existed between England and Flanders before the breach which took place at Arras.¹ The embassy was placed under the control of Henry, Cardinal of England, and at the same time a deputation, consisting of Nicholas Byllesdon, Dean of Salisbury, Thomas Rempton, and others, was despatched to ascertain the sentiments which prevailed in Holland.² The first-named commission was renewed for John, Archbishop of York, in the following year.³ The negotiations appear to have been slow and difficult, but

¹ "Fœdera," x. 713.

² *Ibid.*, p. 714.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 730.

they were in able hands ; while the fact that Philip had entrusted Isabella with the sole conduct of the affair could not fail to prove an important factor in their ultimate success. Embassies were continually passing to and fro between Henry and Isabella,¹ and at length a provisional truce was brought about by the efforts of the English deputies, Stephen Wilton and John Church, which was confirmed by Henry on July 12, 1440 ;² but the settlement provided was so unsatisfactory to both parties, and the infringements upon it so frequent, that the Duchess entered into a fresh series of negotiations for a definite treaty, in which enterprise she was assisted by envoys from Holland.³ On April 23, 1443, the long-desired definitive settlement was successfully negotiated with Richard, Duke of York, Henry's Lieutenant and Governor-General in France. The agreement included in its provisions, as well as England and Flanders, Ireland, Guienne, Anjou, Maine, the Marches of Calais, and all the other dominions of the King of England. The treaty was to take effect in part upon the 15th of the following June for as long as the contracting parties should desire its continuance, with the stipulation that three months' notice was to be given by either side in case of intended withdrawal. The agreement was, however, not to affect Burgundy and Guienne until October 1, 1443, nor was it to override the already existing truce which had been made for Calais. Conservators of the Peace were elected on both sides. The actual wording of the treaty contains the usual provisions dealing with the reciprocal privileges to be granted to merchants and merchandise, the settlement of infringements and disputes, the security

¹ "Fœdera," x. 800, 808, 810 *et seq.*

² *Ibid.*, p. 791. ³ *Ibid.*, xi. 4, 20, 24.

of the fisheries, and of the communication with the Continent. This treaty was maintained by a system of renewals right down to the end of the reign of Philip the Good, whose time, until his death in 1467, was spent in reducing the domains of Burgundy to something more than a nominal unity.

On his father's death in 1467 Charles le Téméraire succeeded to the duchy, for which he hoped before long to obtain the tardy Imperial recognition as a kingdom. The new Duke was a man of a very different calibre from that of his cautious and somewhat narrow-minded predecessors. Ambition held him as it had them, but in his case it was effectually and finally freed from the centripetal spirit of the feudal age that had prevented John the Fearless and Philip the Good from assuming an independent and national position. In Charles the Bold the old bond had been broken. But even if there had been any lingering remnants of this sentiment in the mind of Charles le Téméraire, the character and the policy of Louis XI. of France would have effectually dispelled the illusion. The glittering career of the last of the Burgundian Dukes is unhappily outside the prescribed period, but it must be noticed here that his accession revived the violently English policy which had characterized the first years of Philip the Good; and just as the Burgundian alliance appeared to Henry V. to have placed within his reach the coveted prize of the Crown of France, so did the attitude of Charles le Téméraire conjure up before Edward IV. a similar alluring prospect of easy conquest. But in the case of Edward disillusionment was quick and easy. Louis XI. was not another Charles VI., and the Peace of Pecquigny ended for ever all hopes of English dominion in France. Nevertheless, the Anglo-Burgundian alliance remains

one of the striking facts of the fifteenth century and in the history of Europe, and the spirit of this connection lived on when all that had engendered it was buried in the oblivion of centuries. The work of the Burgundian Dukes exists to-day in the little buffer States of Holland and Belgium, which keep apart the mighty forces of Latin and Teuton, and safeguard by their comparative impotence the position of London as the centre of the commerce of the world.

VI

GENERAL FEATURES OF THE TRADE
CONNECTION BETWEEN ENGLAND
AND FLANDERS

THE political connection of England and Burgundy found its source and strength in the traditional commercial relations which had existed for centuries between England and Flanders. Just at the time when Philip le Hardi entered into possession of Flanders, industry and commerce were in a deplorable state owing to the six years of war that had preceded 1384. The Hanseatic League had removed their centre from Bruges to Dordrecht, Ghent had lost the better part of its burgher population, and Ypres was in ruins. Fifty years of the sympathetic Burgundian rule restored the Low Country towns to their former position as the wealthiest municipalities in Europe.¹ Parallel with their efforts to produce an approximation to political unity in their domains was the introduction of a system of economic reform which went far to effect a remedy for the industrial disunion of the Low Countries, a blemish which found its origin in a diversity of monetary systems and the absence of internal free trade. By the energetic action of the Dukes these obstacles to prosperity were removed. Flanders especially deserved their attention ; it was the most important part of their vast domains,

¹ Pirenne, "Hist. Belgique," ii. 381 *et seq.*

and the wealth of the towns of Flanders added a financial basis of no mean order to the already great territorial claims of the Burgundian House to monarchical dignity. The towns of Flanders depended for their prosperity upon the pastures of England. Wool was the "sovereign treasure" wherewith England in the Middle Ages was said to keep the whole world warm.

The chief English exports which found their way to Flanders were wool, wool-fells, and hides.¹ It was found necessary, both for the convenience of the merchants and for the collection of dues, that certain towns should be appointed as centres for the export trade in wool and the other commodities. Successive series of staple towns were designated for this purpose, but the staple which concerns this period is the one which was fixed at Calais in 1348, and remained there until the recapture of the town by the French in 1558. For two hundred years the commercial history of Calais is practically the commercial history of England.² With regard to the fishing industry, which was the cause of endless disputes between English and Flemish, Calais was of extreme importance, since it provided a convenient base of operations. It was there, also, that the newly-invented salting process was carried on, which enabled the fish to be sold far away from the scene of its capture. The commercial importance of Calais traced its origin to the doctrine that "all goods must first touch at Calais," a proviso which was always attached to the concession of free intercourse between the merchants of England and Flanders. Another curious limitation

¹ Calendar of the Patent Rolls of Richard II., pp. 378, 580.

² Sandeman, "Calais under the English," p. 58.

consisted in ordinances to the effect that merchants should always leave behind them in their ships their arms, artillery, and other "invasibles." There was always the mutual and oft-recurring complaint among the English and the Flemish that their merchants lived on less favourable terms in the one country than in the other. It is certain that racial jealousy was responsible for innumerable crimes, as the Calendar of the Patent Rolls¹ plainly demonstrates; but on the whole it seems that the balance of favours was fairly even.

Calais, being the staple town, was always badly maimed by any dispute which arose between England and France or Flanders. Early in 1408 the English Council was forced to recognize this by the appeal from the merchants of the staple that the truce made in 1406 should be renewed at once to avoid any break whatever.² We have already noticed some of the subsequent renewals which took place under John the Fearless and his successor. The staple system, like all others, became in time subject to abuses, and the Calais staple justifiably incurred the reproach of being the ruin of the English wool trade.³ So much wool found its way to Calais that it became a glut upon the market, and prices began to fall heavily, and thus the staple system, which had been instituted to break the Flemish monopoly, recoiled upon England. The communication by land between Calais and the Flemish towns was always the subject of extreme solicitude. The road between Calais and Gravelines finds a place in several treaties. It is ordained that this highway shall be made large and wide, and adequately

¹ Calendar of the Patent Rolls, v. 194, 282 *et seq.*

² Proceedings of the Privy Council, i. 305.

³ Armstrong, "Staple and Commodities of the Realm."

safeguarded and marked for the convenience of merchants.¹

The rise of the English cloth industry was another feature which marked the commercial connection between England and Flanders. From being merely the producer of the raw material which supplied the looms of Flanders, we can trace the gradual growth of the industrial power of England. This expansion began under Edward III., who introduced Flemish weavers into the English towns. Although at first intended only for home consumption, English cloth is soon found competing with the produce of Flanders in the markets of Europe, and even of Flanders itself.² The realization of this fact naturally introduced a war of prohibitions, which was partially mitigated by the agreements made with regard to Flanders by the Tudor monarchs. The cloth export trade also produced the association of English merchants known as the "Merchant Adventurers," a body which received its first authoritative licence from Henry IV. The society claimed, however, a much earlier origin, and privileges were granted to its members by the Counts of Flanders during the fourteenth century, while Edward III. had fixed upon Bruges for its port. Constitutionally the association was a "regulated company" as opposed to the "joint-stock" corporations. In a regulated company each merchant acted independently of the rest, and was responsible for the sale of his own goods. The great rival of the Merchant Adventurers was naturally the Hanseatic League, which had previously controlled most of the English export trade. It is to be noted both with regard to imports and exports that the Flemish them-

¹ Rymer, "Fœdera," viii. 476.

² *Vide "Intercursus Magnus."*

selves possessed a large and increasing carrying trade. The Calendar of the Patent Rolls teems with instances in which English, Scotch, and Welsh merchants embark their goods in "crayers of Flanders" for transportation.¹ There are frequent incidental instances of English hostility to Scottish commerce. As an example may be cited the royal licence granted on August 23, 1379,² to the merchants and burgesses of Newcastle-upon-Tyne "to buy and take to that place and thence export to Flanders, wool, hides, and wool-fells to the amount of a thousand sacks of English wool, reckoning a last of hides to two sacks and from 200 to 140 wool-fells to one sack of wool, paying custom therefor as at Calais, viz. 19 pence a sack, allowing none others the benefit of this licence and doing their utmost to prevent English grown wool from being fraudulently exported to Scotland."

It was also a practice among the English Kings to bribe the authorities of the Flemish towns to look after English interests. A grant of £20 per annum which was made to a certain Simon Braeme, burgess of Ghent, for the term of his life, on consideration of his becoming the faithful liege of His Majesty King Richard II.,³ we find to have been confirmed by an inspeximus of Henry IV. on March 16, 1400.⁴ This delicate method of pulling the wires appears to have been in great vogue, but the appeals of the Flemish burghers to the successors of the Kings who had made the grants were not always attended with equal fortune. The rise of competitive English industries must have rendered the task of maintaining a cordiality of commercial relationship in-

¹ Calendar of the Patent Rolls (Richard II. to Henry IV.), pp. 51, 361, 424 *et seq.*

² *Ibid.* (1378), p. 580.

³ *Ibid.* (1389), p. 153.

⁴ *Ibid.* (1400), p. 24.

creasingly difficult ; but on the whole the arrangements which were made, in spite of mutual recrimination and infringements, satisfied the ends for which they were created, and carried England and the Low Countries on to the final struggle for commercial supremacy which was decided by the Navigation Laws of the Protector Cromwell.

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